



FROM THE LIBRARY OF  
REV. LOUIS FITZGERALD BENSON, D. D.

BEQUEATHED BY HIM TO  
THE LIBRARY OF  
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SCC  
9943



111  
111  
111  
111





MY OLD LETTERS.

οῖς δ' ὁ γέρων μετέησιν, ἅμα πρόσσω καὶ ὀπίσσω  
λεύσσει, ὅπως ὁχ' ἄριστα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται.

ILIADE, Book III. 109.



# MY OLD LETTERS

BY

HORATIUS <sup>VV</sup> BONAR, D.D.

NEW YORK

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS

No. 530 BROADWAY

1877

Nos tecta fovebimus ossa  
Violis et fronde frequenti :  
Titulumque et frigida saxa  
Liquido spargemus odore.

PRUDENTIUS.

*Not written down in haste, but in the quiet  
Of thoughtful seasons, still to memory dear,  
When the whole soul was calm, and the world's riot,  
Even in its echo, came not to my ear ;  
What I have thought, and felt, and seen, and heard is here.*

*Sometimes the cloud, but oft the happier noonlight  
Floated above me, as I mused and sung :  
At times the stars, at times the mellow moonlight  
Gave ripeness to the fruit of pen and tongue,  
While o'er my ravelled dreams the years and ages hung.*

*In days of public strife, when, sharp and stinging,  
The angry words went daily to and fro,  
Friend against friend the polished missiles flinging,  
Each seeking who could launch the keenest blow,  
I went to thee, my harp, and bade thy numbers flow.*

*In hours of heaviness thy solace seeking,  
I took thee up and woke the trembling tone  
Of the deep melody within thee, speaking  
Like the heart-broken thrush, that sits alone,  
Mourning its spoiled nest and all its nestlings gone.*

*Into these pages peace-thoughts weave their brightness ;  
The peace that has been, is, and is to be,  
Is here ; peace-blossoms in their tranquil whiteness  
I've shaken, as I passed from tree to tree,  
Relics of many a strange and broken history.*

*Lie there, my pen ! Only a little longer,  
And then thy work shall be for ever done :  
Death in these pulses daily groweth stronger ;  
Life's ruby drops are oozing one by one ;  
The dreams that flowed thro' thee shall soon be dreamed alone !*

*Rest kindly now, beside what thou hast written :  
Let that a little longer linger here ;  
By age unwithered, and by time unsmitten,  
True leaves of health, that never can grow sere,  
From the great tree of life, plant of a purer sphere !*

*Thou art the lute with which I sang my sadness,  
When sadness like a cloud begirt my way ;  
Thou art the harp whose strings gave out my gladness,  
When burst the sunshine of a happier day,  
Resting upon my soul with sweet and silent ray.*

*The sickle thou with which I have been reaping  
My great life-harvest here on earth ; and now  
'Mid these my sheaves I lay me down unweeping,—  
Nay, full of joy, in life's still evening-glow,  
And wipe the reaper's sweat from this toil-furrowed brow.*

*From this right hand its cunning is departing,  
This wrinkled palm proclaims its work is done :  
Look back, fond reaper, to thy place of starting,—  
Days, months, and years, a lifetime past and gone ;—  
Say, which is best, thy rising or thy setting sun ?*

*I may not stay. These hills that smile around me  
Are full of music, and its happy glow  
Beckons me upward ; all that here has bound me  
Seems now dissolving ; daily I outgrow  
The chains and drags of earth. I rise, I go, I go !*

## C O N T E N T S.



	<small>PAGE</small>
BOOK I.,	I
BOOK II.,	33
BOOK III.,	59
BOOK IV.,	82
BOOK V.,	108
BOOK VI.,	134
BOOK VII.,	159
BOOK VIII.,	191
BOOK IX.,	222
BOOK X.,	251
BOOK XI.,	285
BOOK XII.,	320



## MY OLD LETTERS.

---

### BOOK I.

LIKE the November leaves they lie around me,  
In broken heaps, or spread out one by one ;  
Older or newer, in their varied forms,  
Memorials of a spring too quickly past :  
Each leaf the relic of a well-known tree,  
Now bare, or vanished from the forest crowd,  
Of which it was in other Mays the king.

The sun of yesterday has set for ever,  
The beacon-gleam across the wave is quenched,  
The sparkle of last midnight's torch is gone,  
The footprints on the sand are all erased,  
The snow has melted from the rock, the dew  
Has at the dawn dissolved : all these are things  
That go, and come not back again to us.

Far more abiding are these time-stained pages,  
Dumb, and yet eloquent in every line ;  
Old love and faith making the faded fresh,  
And lights of other years still beaming there,  
Unblanched and tender as when first they shone.

Half-folded, disarranged, they lie ; yet each

Distinct with a deep history of its own.  
Like the ancestral portraits on the wall,  
Or names engraven on the granite plinth,  
Or golden locket which enshrines the love  
Of loving years and hearts, they alter not  
With the caprice of time or fickle seasons ;  
Dead, yet alive, retaining in their folds  
Perpetual vigour and perennial youth.  
Not like the pressure of now clay-cold fingers,  
Nor like the dream of faces seen no more ;  
Nor echoes of dear footsteps passing by,  
Nor songs once heard from voices long since mute ;—  
Theirs is a yesterday that changes not,  
Except to ripen and grow mellower still ;  
Theirs is a register of soul, which shall  
Remain unblotted, perfect as at first,  
Till he who reads them now shall close his eyes,  
And lay down thankfully his wearied head  
Upon the pillow of the restful earth.

They tell that oft, when the old walls are down,  
And their foundations flung upon the moor,  
Evanishing amid the ebb of ages ;  
When every stone of the paternal hall  
Has crumbled, and commingled with the soil ;  
When the rough elm, first planted ages since  
On the heir's wedding-day, or shining beech  
That lined the avenue or graced the lawn,  
Has fallen, the old garden-flowers are found  
Springing unbidden from the faithful earth,  
True to the soil, the season, and the sun ;  
While here and there a moss-wrapt relic grey

Of ancient orchard, not without its fruit,  
Spreads wide its boughs to the bland August breeze.

They say that in some spots (I know them well,  
The quiet slope, the glen, the purple moor),  
Where martyrs died, or holy men once met  
Under the watchful sky to worship God,  
Sounds sweet as heaven are heard in sunny hours  
(When the year's round recalls the faded past),  
Rising like fragrance from the sod, as if  
The soil had drunk the notes of holier days,  
And loved at times to give them out again,  
Sweetened with age, rich with unearthly peace.  
Such are to me these fragments of green years,  
These pages that give out, each time I touch them,  
The unchanged melodies locked up within ;  
Still full of noon, and noon-day life, though they  
Who wrote them long have left us for the tomb.

Each letter, with its wonted signature,  
The seal and date, and place of dear abode,  
The street, the city, or the rural home,  
Takes the soul back to unforgotten scenes,  
To hopes and fears of the calm long ago,  
Features and friendships of more radiant days,  
The dreams and passions of the swelling soul,  
Voices once warm and eloquent, now dumb.  
The rocks o'er which the breakers went and came,  
The valley with its stream, the beckoning hill  
Which oft we climbed together, or the room  
In which we sat with some lost friend or child  
A shrub, a flower, a tree beneath whose shade  
We lay in summer as we talked and read ;

A book, a thought, a sorrow, or a joy,  
A jest, an argument, a dreamy tale ;  
A death, a birth, a wedding, or a tomb,  
A parting or a meeting ; or a stroll  
Of love or friendship, when one soul pours out  
Into another all its busy dreams,  
Gazing upon the sea, or wondering stars,  
Or gold-begotten clouds of royal morn,  
Or earth-enamoured moon, that smiles in love  
Upon a scene that answers smile for smile :—  
These are the things which, graven deep on each  
Pale line, bring back whole worlds of history.

They who made up our life are dying daily,  
Yet the life-current of the world flows on,  
And we have but to wander by its edge,  
And gather up the relics flung ashore.  
We are all orphans ; every leaf that fails  
But addeth to the orphanage of earth ;  
And as each yesterday breaks off, and joins  
The past, we feel our being less complete.

In every line,—some clear as at the first,  
Like the new-carved inscription, others like  
Grey tombstones with their half-worn epitaphs,—  
I feel the throbbing of a kindred heart  
That beats no more ; I recognise the flash  
Of eyes now closed ; I clasp the hand that once  
Clasped mine and pledged immortal constancy,  
As if it never could relax its grasp,  
Or lose the warmth with which it folded mine.

Looking at these mute relics of the spring,—  
My spring and theirs whom love had knit to me,

Preserved like pearls from robber or decay,—  
Turning their withered pages o'er and o'er,  
I seem to sit upon a cliff of echoes,  
Round which float up from the still vales below  
Or woods beyond, all voices and all sounds  
Of melody and speech, of harp and tongue ;  
The music of a lifetime garnered there :  
Some the first breathings of a clinging heart,  
Some the last syllables of love, as if,  
Stretched to its full, the last string broke in twain  
With the low note that ended the last song.

More in the garden grows than what is sown ;  
Not weeds alone, but flowers come up unbidden,  
Sown by the careful winds. So here I mark  
Not the parched petal, but the vital seed ;  
For each word dropping from the lip or pen  
Of man or woman is a seed that dies not,  
Wafted afar, to spring we know not where.

O loving winds, that bear such seeds as these  
Into my garden, and there lay them down  
To be a lifetime's sweetness, in which all  
The hoarded essence of the past I find ;  
To be to me, in this the gentle twilight  
And silence of these now retreating years,  
Like the night-blooming flower, that only spreads  
Its beauty and its odour to the stars.

And all the months are here ; true waymarks, not  
Linked only with old seasons and old suns,  
But with the changes of a human heart :  
Here are life's hues, its marvellous mosaic,  
The rough and smooth of mortal history.

Capricious April with its clouds is here,  
Scattering its daffodils, or showering down  
Daisies like silver rain to stud the fields :  
May with its forest-buds and orchard-bloom :  
June with its length of fervent day, all light,  
All incense : July taking on the tinge  
Of chastened calm, as if the hastening year  
Had passed its noon ; maturer sunshine now  
Kindly dispensing, when the ripe rich air  
Breathes o'er the burnished corn, by day and night,  
Pouring its magic wealth into each blade  
Of swelling grain, and bidding harvest haste  
To the embrace of the impatient sickle :  
Dear August, month of sunny memories,  
Of idle wanderings by the welcome sea,  
Of reveries by rock and waterfall ;  
Its fields of white, with the lark's chant above,  
The reaper's song below at joyous dawn ;  
Its school-boy holidays of liberty,  
Its shadowy mountains blazing to the top  
With the full-blossomed heath : October brown,  
Type of the worn-out year, disrobing earth  
For her dark wintry sleep : November dull,  
Fickle as April, with its falling stars,  
Seeming as if the torches of the heavens,  
In preparation for the coming dark,  
Were shaken, that they might shine freshly out  
With keener brilliance thro' the crystal air :  
Austere December, sternly laying down  
Its bed of ice and coverlet of snow,  
For the o'er-weary earth, till spring return.

We bear with winter, for it has its sweets ;  
But never long for it, and always sigh  
For the green spring-life, and the summer-breath,  
The months of resurrection and of song.  
Go, Winter, go, we say, and let the snowdrops,  
Like buried stars, burst up ; the primroses,  
Fair daughters of the forest and the shade,  
Wave their pale golden coronets around ;  
The leafless almond-bloom invite the bee  
To taste its new-born nectar, virgin-pure ;  
The willow-buds by the glad watercourse  
Swell into rounded freshness ; in the wood  
The wind-flower woo the breeze it loves so well.

They go and come again, these months of change,  
But they who made them what they were come not :  
The casket is the same, the gem is fled ;  
The chalice sparkles, but the wine is drained ;  
The sky endureth, but the stars have left.  
Graves far and near are all that now remain,  
And Memory, taking up each cherished name,  
Hides it securely in her holiest urn.

Strange is the life of others seen by us  
Onlooking quietly, as from the shore  
Appears the silent ship in the dim offing,  
Passing us by we know not whither bound.  
More strange the life now gone, of which we once  
Formed part, but which long since has quitted us ;  
Outstripping us and moving out of sight  
On the broad deep, or at our very side,  
In some tempestuous midnight, going down  
With its large freightage 'neath the surge of time.

Strange, too, our own lives, giving forth each hour  
Their mysteries of motion or of rest.  
But yesterday my heart could not be still  
For joy ; the throbbing sunshine shook it all ;  
The very air was trembling with the light.  
To-day that heart refuses to be calm  
For grief, which as a tempest seizes me,  
And sweeps me on like cloud of night that has  
No anchor, and no pilot, and no helm.

And in these letters all this life of mine,  
Mirrored in lives of others, rises up.  
My perplexed being is unriddled here,  
And I begin to understand myself,  
Tho' shrinking from the mirror held up thus ;  
I see what once I was, what now I am,  
And many a mystery becometh clear.  
I see the path, the thicket, and the goal,  
The folly that I chose, the truth I shunned ;  
The error, and the evil, and the light,  
The prison-house and the deliverance ;  
The half-fought battle and the vile defeat,  
Yet sometimes, too, the noble victory ;  
The spoken or unspoken thought of sin ;  
The hasty word, uttered and then recalled,  
The angry tone when yet the speech was gentle ;  
The weariness and the reviving strength,  
The low despair and the rekindling hope ;  
The fearless faith or dark uncertainty ;  
The tangled hours of this mis-shadowed life  
Becoming clear and eloquent as day ;  
The brave confronting with the jealous gale,

And then the gliding into the still haven.  
These read I here in all these many lives,  
Woven into one, like rich embroidery  
Upon some antique hanging. In these scrolls  
I recognize the interpreters of days  
And doings in which lie the feeble germs  
Of unenfolded being, just preparing  
To start upon the everlasting race,  
Begun down here, to be completed yonder  
In the fair realm from whose blue battlements  
The stars look down upon us in their love.

A mother's love is ever in its spring,  
It knows no frost ; with true Peneian verdure  
All over green, unseared by age or clime.  
A mother's letters, broken tho' they be,  
And brief perhaps, yet, like the mellow fruit  
Of a perpetual autumn, daily yield  
Their unexhausted sweetness, and impart  
Strength in the hours of feebleness and doubt.  
A sister's arm, like a white silken cord,  
Stronger than iron chain, and like asbestos  
Proof against fire, folds round our boyhood's life,  
Infusing tenderness, yet giving strength ;  
Smoothing the rough, and into harmony,  
By its soft touch, as by a spell from heaven,  
Bringing the youthful discords of the heart.  
A sister's letters, best of chronicles,  
Like faithful sun-prints, give us back ourselves,  
Recording the fond household's history  
Of undivided fellowship and love,

Till death or distance snapped the holy chain ;—  
The bitters and the sweets, the heights and hollows,  
The meetings and the partings, the mishap  
Ending in mirth, the deeper ill in tears ;  
Loquacious joy that cannot hold its peace,  
Mute sorrow, yet more eloquent than joy.  
And from these shreds of other days floats up  
The fragrance of the venerable life,  
In midst of which we grew to manhood's prime,  
Becoming thus what now we are, the sons  
Of the past age and fathers of the future.

Their touch has calmness in it, and the fire  
That breathed in some has died out with the years ;  
The warmth remains, but the fierce blaze has sunk ;  
And when the ruffled spirit seeks repose  
Or soothing in the midst of weary frets,  
It turns to these ; and as it turns, the storm  
Smooths into stillness, and each chafing wave  
Obeys the charm. However far I go,  
These scrolls recall me to old love and rest.  
I hear dead voices saying, Wander not !  
Return ! I cannot but comply ; I come,—  
Won by the spell of unforgotten tones,  
That still retain their heart-controlling power,  
And, like Ulysses, wander back to home.

Oh my own Ithaca, my home, my home !  
(Spake he not thus, the wanderer of the isles ?)  
Where the child rose into the boy, the boy  
Into the man, with sunshine all about him !  
Oh my own Ithaca, my home, my home !  
Barren it may be, but oh, beautiful

Beyond all other islands of the wave !  
In thoughts and dreams I turn to thee ; but thou  
Canst never be to me what once thou wert.  
All changed art thou, and they, the loved and loving  
Who made thee what thou wert, have left thy shore.

Neither in life nor death are we alone ;  
We cannot isolate our being from  
That of our fellows, more than can the stars  
Unlace their mingled radiance. The great race  
Is one, each age and clime together clasped,  
And each man, like each ocean-drop, or more  
Or less affecting all his fellows round.  
In ways we know not, and at points of which  
We dream not, daily we on all are telling.  
We cast a shadow as we pass along,  
Unthinkingly, or give out silent light,  
Dispensing joy or sorrow, ill or good,  
From that occult and passive influence  
Which man breathes out on man unconsciously.  
The turret-clock in the great city's depths,  
That strikes the dreaded or the welcome hour,  
Knows not what bitterness or joy it brings  
With the resounding stroke, that, like a knell,  
Enters some trembling ear, and breaks the heart,  
Or, like a flash from heaven, lights up the soul ;  
Yet none the less it does its certain work.  
The balance knows not whether lead or gold  
Is laid upon it, just alike to all.  
The book, each page inanimate and mute,  
Cares not who reads it, nor can understand  
The tears or smiles that thickly fall upon it,

The peace or trouble which its words provoke.  
The silent clouds above us feed the springs  
Which swell into the mighty streams on which  
Earth's cities rise, and by which they are fed.  
We may be but the cloud ; it matters not,  
So be it that we fill our place, and do  
Our work on earth until earth's work is done.  
That doing is no sport ; done well or ill,  
It is no dream, but tells on all around ;  
And no man from his fellow ever can  
Shake himself wholly free on any side,  
Present or future, or for good or ill :  
Our fathers mould us, and we mould our sons.  
So work these pages their unconscious work ;  
They know not what they say to him who cons them,  
Like tree unwitting of the fruit it bears.

What are they doing who have passed the bourne ?  
They whom we loved so well, and lost long since,—  
What are they feeling ? Do they love as once  
They loved when here ? We still are passing thro'  
A life of tempest ; are they in the calm ?  
Are the unsettled interests of time,  
That swayed them to and fro with fear and hope,  
Absorbed in the eternal settlement ?  
And the disharmonies of misyoked life  
All sweetened into happy unison ?  
Is the remorseless roughness of the road  
Once trod, when side by side we walked below,  
Now sweetly levelled ? Is all pain unknown,  
And heaviness and heartache and unrest ?  
Is darkness now submerged in tranquil light

Poured from no earthly sun ? Are wounds all healed,  
Hot passions soothed to rest, deep blanks re-filled ?  
And disappointments that o'ershadowed life  
As with one dense eclipse, are they forgotten  
In the redeeming sweetness of that love  
Which is itself the very heaven of heavens ?

They have passed on before, at height of day  
Outstripping us, yet beckoning us to come.  
Above us now the once sense-fettered soul  
Roams in the liberty of ripened being,  
Without a burden and without a chain.  
These pages tell me what they did and felt ;  
But what they now are, I must learn elsewhere :  
Earth's records are for earth, and of the things  
Of earth alone can tell. For that which is  
Within the screen, I must consult with those  
Whose eyes have seen afar, whose ears have heard  
The songs that celebrate eternal peace.  
Dear as these pages are, they but record  
A few faint beatings of some human hearts  
Amid the fevers and the frosts of life.

The history of suns long set is here ;  
Pictures of skies o'er which the sudden cloud  
Of tempest in a moment rolled ; the dreams  
Of treasure-laden barques that never came ;  
Of stars that never rose ; of radiant flowers  
That never blossomed ; of pellucid founts  
That never saw the sunshine, nor poured forth  
Their hidden sparkles to the kindly morn ;  
Of angel forms, which in these later days  
(Oh, sad for man to be denied such guests !)

Have ceased to visit our forsaken earth.  
Here are the waymarks of a mistaught mind,  
The fitful footprints of a faltering life ;  
The driftwood flung amid the rocks, and left  
Beyond the tide-line and the surge, on this  
The foreshore of th' immeasurable main  
That men and angels call eternity.

Here, too, I find mild gleams of cheerful light,  
The episodes of grave and graceful being,  
Of life in sunshine,—voyages across  
A land-locked sea, on which the scourging wind  
Can lay no hold, o'er which the luminous sail  
Glides with invisible motion, like the planets  
Over the upper azure, unalarmed ;  
The episodes of wise and earnest life,  
Filled up with words that live and deeds that tell ;  
The life of noble growth, in which to-day  
Is yesterday's apt scholar, and to-morrow,  
The docile, pensive pupil of to-day ;  
The meek life, into which the scalding words  
Of human passion have not found their way,  
But which the cooling notes of heavenly love  
Pervade in all its parts, and saturate  
The air with genial music, till the peace  
Spreads out on all sides, like the widening ripple  
Of the still lake, touched by the swallow's wing.

Strange scraps of life are here, like pages torn  
At random from some volume of the past ;  
Fragments of being, not without a meaning.  
As the split rock shows where the lightning struck,  
As the torn flag shows what the banner was,

As the old song recalls some noble name,  
Or the worn coin an empire's history ;  
So each of these frail symbols links itself  
With man's whole circle, asking us to solve  
The riddle of an immortality  
Whose twisted coil was to itself a chaos ;  
For our own lives are little understood,  
Even by ourselves. That mazy labyrinth  
We call existence ; that pure mystery  
By us named soul ; that silent rudder-power  
Which we term will ; that sacred lamp, the mind ;  
That marvellous aurora of the dark  
Which we style fancy ; that sweet morning dew  
Which we call love ;—these in their several parts  
And acts are all enigmas, to be read  
By light not of this sky, by subtlety  
Transcending that of man's keen intellect ;  
And what we know not now we then shall know,  
When from the heights of the eternal hills  
We shall look back on time, interpreting  
Old dreams, unravelling the tangled network  
Of life, and knowing even as we are known.

All after-thoughts belong to man, with all  
The doubts that hang around us here ; to God  
Pertains the eternal forethought, and pure light  
That knows no shadow of a shade : to Him  
All space, all time, are ever, ever clear ;  
Himself the present, and Himself the future,  
Himself the first and last, the ALL IN ALL.  
High souls are here, that rose on mighty wing  
Above the multitude and found a name,

Not soon to drop from earth's large history ;  
Some brave in perilous action, other some  
Braver in perilous endurance ; some  
Are here whose steps were peace, whose eyes were light ;  
Some with a chequered sky of cloud and blue,  
Like northern summers, sad with many a storm ;  
Some pressing on with silent earnestness,  
Calm, yet without the brilliant glow of sunshine ;  
Others, life-weary men, who, sick at heart,  
And crossed in hope, found not which way to look,  
Or into what safe port of peace to turn  
From the cross-currents of a blustering age ;  
Some light of heart and free, but other some  
Steeped in earth's bitter absinthe, and made drunk  
With wine of sorrow ; some that swept thro' earth  
Like torches thro' the desert night ; and some  
Hidden from sight, yet from their secret nooks  
Telling like violets on the general air ;  
Some much with men, a few much with themselves ;  
And others much with God, from Him receiving  
The power supernal by which men are moved,  
The force divine, which, like electric fire,  
Goes out resistless, tho' unseen, to do  
Its work of goodness against all things evil,  
Its work of life against the strength of death.

Some names are here, on whose dark tombs I gaze  
As on extinct volcanoes, burning once  
With wasting fire that scorched where'er it came ;  
Who might have loved, and healed, and comforted,  
But never loved, nor healed, nor comforted.  
Theirs were but names of wonder, and no more :

The gentle charities of happy being,  
 The wayside flowers of mild and suasive life,  
 That shed their genial softness thro' the soul,  
 Grew not within a circle such as theirs.  
 Their paths of sullen, self-willed wandering  
 Skirted the blighted heath or splintered cliff ;  
 They sought the echo of the cataract,  
 Or flowerless ruggedness of ocean's strand.  
 In them the human heart seemed ever beating  
 In lawless pulses ; swift and stormy now,  
 As if its channels would give way ; again,  
 Too slow for life, as if congealed within.

Some here I find whose placid course was all  
 A voyage of pleasure o'er an inland lake,  
 Studded with islands and girt round with green,  
 Over whose sunny crystal tempests breathe not ;  
 Others whose life, vexed with time's wasting strife,  
 Seemed like a strong sail, riddled with the shot  
 Of life-long battle, into pieces falling.—  
 And yet I find that, even in some of these,  
 Defeat, altho' disaster, was not shame.

Ah me ! the affections of this life grow old,  
 And die like spring-buds in the pinching wind !  
 Love, even the deepest, cannot last : at morn,  
 'Tis fair as light ; ere even, exhaled like dew,  
 Or like a rainbow buried in the cloud  
 From which it rose, and upon which it hung.  
 The dearest tie that ever knit two hearts  
 (Each like the other as two budding roses)  
 Snaps, and the loved one passes out of sight ;  
 The brightest eyes are fading, and their sparkle

Is vanishing amid the mortal mist  
That wraps this globe and darkens earthly homes.  
Yet, 'mid the ruins of the human heart,  
I sit me down and sing the song of hope,  
The song of the rebuilding and the joy.

Most of earth's history has passed away,  
Like the spring torrents of Arabian sands,  
Which leave behind no record of their flow ;  
Yet doubt I not that it is written somewhere,  
To be brought forth, and speak the buried truth  
Contained within all things which God has made,  
Or man has done, however small and poor.  
Nothing is lost, tho' what becomes of all  
The light, the force, the motion that for ages  
Have flowed, reflowed, crossed, and recrossed the vastness  
Of boundless space, we know not, save but this,  
That thus the fabric of the universe  
Is woven into its endless perfectness,  
And wrought into the stedfast harmony  
For which all things above, below, are ripening,  
Unfolding purposes we understand not.  
And such old letters are the seeds of what  
Shall one day, in new resurrection-power,  
Arise to tell of all that once has been  
Spoken or done or felt beneath the sun.

The story of this earth is one of shipwreck,—  
Of parted anchors and of sunken hulls,  
Torn sails, lost helms, and buried argosies,  
O'er which the unfurrowed sky still bends unmoved,  
And for which man has long since ceased to mourn.  
The good goes down, the evil floats above :

'Tis not the face of ocean, but its floor  
That holds the gems of time ; its precious things  
Are far beyond the search of human eye.  
Rude Scythia 'neath her black unhammered rocks  
Buries the emerald ; the chalcedony  
Hard by the dark Symplegades hides deep  
Its yellow splendour ; man is wandering o'er  
A city of the dead, some lost Pompeii,  
Whose ruins and whose riches and whose life  
Lie heaped together in one hopeless tomb.

That Book of heaven, the gift of Him whose thoughts  
Are only truth, is but the epitome  
Of one whose range is both eternities.  
We turn its leaves, and note in each with awe  
The unlikeness to all words of man,—the abrupt  
Yet steady flow throughout the ages past ;  
Its breaks and links, its chaste variety,  
Yet its mysterious and unstudied oneness.  
The symbols that have marked the ages past,  
And done true pilot-service to the world,—  
The buds of truth which throughout every land  
Have burst and ripened, are all here ; and here  
The under-showings of the coming life,  
Of full-developed beauty, are contained.  
The pens of many lands and times are here ;  
Yet are they one in thought and theme and word,  
One in authority of speech to man,  
And one in superhuman tone ; most like,  
In unity and wide immensity,  
The tesselated firmament aloft,

Made up of rainbows, clouds, and stars and blue.  
Instinct in each bright line with subtle force,  
Charged with creative fire from heaven itself,  
It quickens the cold eye and palsied hand,  
Making the mute lips eloquent that read,  
And purging earthly grossness from the soul.  
The deeds with which the world has sowed its fields  
When earth was younger, and from which have come  
Harvests in later years of noble goodness ;  
By whose meek influence the laws and hearts  
Of nations have been moulded, here are written,  
Selected and arranged by Him who gave  
To earth its seasons, to the sea its tides,  
To the lone river its melodious rhythm,  
To the uplifted hills their lofty awe,  
And to the universe its majesty ;  
No random page and no unmeaning line.

Not upon fiction, but on truth alone  
The immortality within is fed.  
Not fable, but a history divine,  
Human yet superhuman, everywhere  
Unearthly but of earth, and steeped in love  
Higher than man's or woman's, can provide  
The anodyne of pain, the quickening food  
For the world's famine, or replenishment  
For the deep void of the unsolaced heart,  
That yearns in silence for the great and true,  
To fill its vastness and to cheer its gloom.

That mighty Book of heaven ! what has it not  
Done for a careworn world, whose very smiles  
Bear witness to the void within ? Its truths

Have sounded thro' the ever-echoing earth,  
And filled the air with joy. It has taught men  
How to pluck life from the abyss of death ;  
How to look down into the tomb, and see  
Not bones and dust, but incorruption there ;  
How to drink deep the cup of bitterness,  
Yet find in every drop immortal health ;  
How to endure the long sharp throb of pain,  
And yet give thanks to Him who kindly sent it ;  
How to gaze up into the cheerless heavens,  
When the red bolt is splintering the rock,  
And read the love unquenchable of Him  
Who out of midnight brings the dazzling day ;  
How to peer down into the desolate depths  
Of ocean, and discover in that gloom  
The arm that reaches far below these depths,  
And lifts the sunken victim from the wave ;  
How, when alone amid a hostile world,  
To look up and to see the placid sky  
Filled with the weaponed hosts of light, sent down  
To win for us the eternal victory.

The thoughts that have been torches to the  
world,

Self-luminous, like Israel's pillar-cloud,—  
Which have gone up and down the passive globe  
Like angels, and have found a resting-place  
In every clime, have issued from this source ;  
The verities of word and deed, which wait  
The expansion of the ages, all are here.  
Tho' undeveloped, and unrecognised  
By human unbelief, they yet shall fill

All being, reaching the remotest parts  
Of time and space, God's two infinities.

The song that has redeemed the commonplace  
Of ages or of schools is written here,—  
The word that from the gates of Paradise  
Went forth and took possession of earth's altars,  
In visible symbol laid upon the turf,  
Type of the life for life, the death for death,  
Is graven here with an eternal pen ;  
The seed-words of the ages all are here,  
Gems dropped from heaven, and sparkling in the gloom  
Or twilight of this error-shaded earth.

The truths that from the tree of Golgotha  
Went forth and took the world by storm, like hosts  
Mighty in war, yet without shield or sword,  
Lodge here, as in some royal citadel,  
Ready for deeds of might in day of battle,  
Or happy service in the hour of peace.  
In slow procession, with no battle-cry  
Or sound of trumpet, calmly march they forth  
From gates of Old Jerusalem, to overflow  
The ages, cover realms, seize Gentile thrones,  
Defying the dread gods of Greece and Rome,  
Cumæan or Dodonian oracles,  
And subtle strength of stern philosophy,  
The wisdom of the Porch or the Lycaeum.  
They have gone forth to conquer ; and they have  
O'errun this populous globe, crossed seas and straits,  
Desert and swamp and mountain, in their march ;  
Peopled all isles and continents and realms,  
Pervaded cities with their new-born spell,

Paphos and Corinth, Athens, Ephesus.  
The idol-fanes they seized, expelled their gods  
(As with the scourge of cords the lowly One  
Drove from the temple of all temples once  
The merchants and the merchandise of old),  
Leaving to perish, with a sure decay,  
Tripods and altars, images and garlands.  
They scourged the priesthood out, in whose dark rites  
The untrue and the impure of ancient ages  
Had taken refuge and become incarnate,  
By whom gross things were beautified, to win  
Man's love and worship, to build up for him  
A fond religion of the fair ideal,  
The Syrian goddess or the Delian god,—  
Each statue a symbolic lust, encradled  
In virgin marble or in bronze enthroned :  
The flowers of the pure earth, the forest leaves,  
The dells, the mossy caves, and waterfalls,  
Rocks, rivers, and the unpolluted sea,  
The dewy mountains, sky, sun, moon, and stars,  
All linked with human passion, and debased  
From their sweet pureness, to become the haunts  
Of fabled deities, whose worshippers  
Knelt at the shrine of gods more vile than men.

Humanity's uplifted eyes say, Who  
And what is God ? Where, how can He be found ?  
Is He on earth in temples made with hands,  
Amid these solemn mountains, or within  
That ocean swaying to and fro, as if instinct  
With life beyond itself ? Or is He far  
Beyond the vision of mortality ?

Humanity's outstretched hands cry out,  
'Show us the Father, and it will suffice !'  
'Who, who will show us any good ?' has been  
And still is everywhere the bitter moan  
Of empty, aching hearts, that feel far down  
The loneliness of being left without  
One greater than themselves to fill the largeness  
Of such a soul as has been made to love,  
And take in love such as its greatness craves.  
'Show us the Father, and it will suffice !'  
Is the sore cry of human hearts that came  
To this bright world for joy, but found it not.  
That cry God answers, pointing to yon babe,—  
The babe of poverty, despised of man,  
That lay in weakness on a woman's knee,  
And sucked a woman's breast,—to yonder man  
That walked in sadness this unloving earth,  
Doing the mighty deeds of heavenly grace,  
And speaking words such as man never spake ;  
That hung in shame upon yon cross, and lay  
Within yon stony tomb, then rose again,  
And went on high to unbar the gate of day  
To us, the wanderers of the night below.

O manger-cradle ! what to thee we owe,  
Where the first footsteps of descending God  
Printed themselves on this unconscious earth !  
O tree of death, to us the tree of life,  
Whose fruit is immortality and joy,  
Let us sit down beneath thy laden boughs  
And pluck thy mellowness, to famished souls  
Sweeter by far than Israel's angel-bread.

O rocky tomb, the three days' prison-house  
Of Him, the Mighty, whom no bars could bind,  
Prince of both life and death, we joy to find  
Thee empty now, the only tomb of earth  
Without a guest, thee empty evermore!

He who doubts nothing, nothing knows: so runs  
The proverb. Yet to doubt is not to know;  
To know is not to doubt: true knowledge is  
Deliverance from doubt, and from the bondage  
Which chains the doubter; he who winneth this  
Is nobly blest; for all uncertainty  
Is heaviness of spirit, and a load  
By far too grievous to be borne.—A creed  
Sent down from Him who is the only Wise  
Is the true ending of all human doubt,  
The one foundation of all certainty,  
The end of mental bondage, the beginning  
Of freedom to the conscience and the soul.  
That which is certain can alone set free;  
It is uncertainty that makes us bondsmen,  
Or else possession of a cherished lie,  
Clenching the fetters of the mind; truth only,  
Not guessed at, nor half-proved, but coming down  
Like light from the supernal Light of light,  
Sets free and makes the spirit walk erect;  
Not like Enceladus, by Etna crushed,  
Nor like Prometheus, prisoned on his rock;  
But like the buoyant eagle, soaring high,  
Free and disburdened, to the upper heaven.

The birth of error is without a thro';  
The travail-pangs of truth are terrible,

Convulsing nations in their agony.  
Evil comes in, all smiles and holiday,  
With harlot-purple decked, and mimic gems,  
The sound of trumpet heralding her march ;  
But good, amid the tempest and the strife,  
Hard struggling into life and hope, its path  
Oft lighted by the fires of martyrdom.  
'Tis sown in weakness, it is raised in power ;  
It dies to live, and roots itself in ashes.

So be it: out of sickness cometh health ;  
Out of morn's tempest comes eve's golden calm ;  
The dawn is the dear offspring of the night ;  
And like a mother dying as she gives  
Birth to a noble son, so dies the darkness  
As she brings forth her fair-haired man-child Day.

Let us be sowers, yet be reapers too.  
In speaking we are sowers of the seed,  
In listening we are reapers of the harvest.  
Sow well and reap well ; spring and harvest are  
Twin brothers, though all summer comes between.  
He who knows most and best speaks least, and with  
The fewest words in speaking, but the fool  
Talks golden hours away ; and yet a fool  
Is sometimes right, a wise man sometimes wrong.

Let not the currents of the age prevail  
To sweep you from your stable anchorage ;  
Seek to be still, amid the noise and heat  
Of streets and crowds, and strife of angry men,  
Whose voices are but passion and revenge.  
'Tis the calm voice that conquers ; violence  
Of pen or lip but weakens argument,

Wounding the truth by its own advocate.  
Go, master thine own will, be king within  
Thyself ; so shalt thou rule o'er other wills.  
'Tis not hard force that best can baffle force,  
And mock the blow. See that fierce thunderbolt !  
It strikes the tower, and the big stones are splintered ;  
It strikes the cliff, the rock is cloven in twain ;  
It strikes the sea, and sinks in baffled might :  
The soft wave calmly quenches its quick fire.

Fret not for news ; they will come soon enough  
If ill ; if good, they can afford to wait :  
Or good or ill, they will ere long grow old,  
And like ripe fruit will drop into thy hand.  
Be patient, keep your spirit still, for storms  
Are all about you, and you cannot say,  
Even to the lightest of them, Peace, be still.  
The skilful pilot can control the barque,  
But not the breeze ; the rock defies the gale,  
Unmoved, but cannot soothe it into calm.

'Better to be the hammer than the anvil,'  
They said of old. So said not He who came  
In heavenly charity to bear our griefs,  
And to endure the life-long taunts of men,  
Who hated goodness for its own sweet sake.  
Better to bear than to inflict the wound !  
He who requites must be divinely just,  
And He who taketh vengeance must be love.  
Better to be the anvil than the hammer.  
Fear not the blow ; the patient anvil shrinks not,  
Nor dreads the hammer : let it strike without  
A pause, it wears or shivers but itself.

Be not ashamed of truth, however old,  
Nor think the newest is perforce the best.  
The orchard's aged trees do often shame  
The new and young. I know it has been said,  
Past waters turn no mills ; but yet, again,  
I do bethink me of a truer proverb :  
Respect the fountain of whose waters thou  
And all thy sires have drunk. Truth never sheds  
Its leaves, nor fears the winter ; on its head  
No grey hairs ever come. The ancestry  
Of wisdom is eternal and divine.  
Judge truth not by its garb, but by itself :  
Not by the scabbard, but the blade, we prove  
The authentic sword ; so by its inward worth  
We rate the truth ; so by the life within,  
Shining thro' many a veil, we know the man,  
Not by his dwelling or his costly robe.  
Look not upon the cup, but upon that  
Which it contains ; the cup itself is nought.

All precious things are rare, not to be bought  
As merchandise, bestowed by God alone.  
One in ten thousand has the dower of beauty,  
And who can bargain for that perilous dower ?  
One in ten thousand has the gift of song,  
And who can buy that lip or lyre divine ?  
Not one of twice ten thousand has possessed  
The double heritage of song and beauty.  
God knoweth how to give and to withhold :  
His common stars He scatters o'er the night,  
His brightest gem He keepeth for the morn.  
Rise, orb of silver ! 'tis to thee we turn,

Stealing in sweetness up the jewelled blue,—  
Not for thyself, but for the news thou bringest  
Of something fairer than thyself. Oh, shine,  
And lead us to the land beyond thyself,  
The region of an everlasting sun !  
Gem of the Orient, whose splendour rests  
Upon a thousand hills, a thousand seas,  
We hail thee as the earnest of the noon ;  
And having found thee, we set forth to seek  
The diamond mine from which thy brilliance came.  
Thou, but a spark struck from the chariot-wheel  
Of dawn, as issuing from the heavenly gate,  
Biddest us look and wait for what is coming.  
This is the age of stars ; the age of suns  
Is on its way ; we know that it will come.

One voice from all these varied pages sounds,  
More true than ancient oracle ere spoke :  
Seize the one moment for the moment's work,  
Or failure must be thine ! To-morrow's sun  
Lights up no yesterdays ; the broken bridge  
Yieldeth no passage to the traveller ;  
The swerving arrow winneth not the prize ;  
The ship that has so often come and gone  
Makes its last voyage, and goes down. In vain  
We mourn the past, or strive to gather up  
Lost sunshine, or replace the vanished rainbow.  
Lost gold may be recovered ; severed love  
Be re-cemented, friendships knit again  
In double strength, that one cold word had sundered ;  
The straying arrow may return unblunted  
To the unfaithful bow that played it false ;

But the lost moment perishes for ever,  
Like pearl flung out into the deep, beyond  
The fathom-line or reach of diver's hand.

This is the day of motion ; history  
Fast and yet faster moveth : but all motion  
Is not advancement. Thought is now adrift,  
And who shall anchor it or hold the helm ?  
The anchored barques are tugging at their chains,  
And the unanchored are all out upon  
A sea of tumult, striking each the other.—  
Slow,—and yet slower ! for I hear afar  
The sound of the fog-signals.—Slower yet !  
The air is thick, and peril on all sides  
Warns us to watch and keep the helm in hand  
The years are wiser than the days ; let us  
Be still and wait ; the mist will rise ere long.

Meanwhile in silence the recumbent earth  
Moves on, unconscious of the hurricane,  
Round its old self, and round the constant sun,  
Impelled by laws it knows not, yet obeys.  
So let us glide upon our tranquil path,  
Unswerving, with our eye upon the goal,  
And in obedience to a law which sweetly  
Draweth us onward, yet in doing so  
Keeps us unshaken,—says to us, Be still !

I look with awe upon the stedfast past,  
So unrecallable and motionless,  
And yet so full of all that once was life,  
And warmth, and motion ; like an iceberg vast,  
Its million drops all frozen into one ;  
Or like a mighty continent, filled up

With the debris of ages, there it lies  
Behind me in its greatness ; and as I  
Move on and on, it closes quick behind,  
And shuts its gates against me ; yet I feel  
Its awful shadow cast upon my present.  
As I stretch out my hand to touch it, all  
Is cold and unresponsive, yet I can  
Pluck from its silent wastes the withered flowers  
Of days that have stolen past in soundless haste ;  
And I can gaze upon its dim low hills,  
Beyond revisiting, left far behind.

The future cometh, rolling in its waves  
With all their burdens, eager to land its freight  
On the firm shore, and to become the past.  
I see it coming, billow upon billow.  
And what these far-off crests convey to us,  
Of evil or of good, I know not ; soon  
They will roll in upon the welcome strand,  
And all that heaving future, with its warmth  
And change and waywardness, lie still and cold.

The fire that purifies the gold must first  
Dissolve the ore ; the soil that vivifies  
The seed must first become its tomb ; each part  
And atom of this globe is passing thro'  
The potter's hands, and will ere long give up  
The secrets of its being, the great thoughts  
With which creation travails, bringing forth  
The eternal perfect from the imperfect past.  
Linked with the changes which make up the days  
Of that which we call time, each fragment has  
A marvellous story of itself to tell :

Child of the ages past, it says, am I,  
For out of all of them have I come forth ;  
Part of them all am I ; their history  
Is mine, and mine is theirs ; their spirit rests  
Upon me, and hath made me what I am.  
Child of the ages yet to come am I,  
They are my heritage ; to-morrow's sun  
May or may not arise upon me here,  
But somewhere and somehow I know to-morrow  
Will yet be mine, as yesterday hath been.

We know no rapture here without its chill ;  
No song but dies and leaves the asking ear  
Unsatisfied ; no day without its fall ;  
The lustre of the undiluted light,  
Meek and unchangeable, is only known  
In the far region of unwrinkled skies.  
For life and death are woven into each other :  
The day of the untwining comes apace ;  
We know it, and lift up our head in joy.

Faith walks in night, yet is not of the night ;  
And Hope, her fellow, looks into the east,  
Where, marking the long cloud-bars all of gold,  
It says, ere day is up, Behold the sun !

## BOOK II.

---

‘AT noon, when day was all awake, and light,  
Mother of day, had breathed her ample life  
O’er the dead face of earth, I sat amid  
The monoliths of old Phœnicia’s shrine,  
On sunny Malta’s sea-embosomed rock,  
And thought of ancient altars, broken gods’  
(So read I here in this old page of friendship).

‘Once, too, at eve, ere twilight had come down,  
When the ripe sunshine dropped o’er land and sea,  
Like yellow fruit in autumn, I went out  
Amid the pillared groups of marble ruin  
Strewed o’er Italia’s western shores, that seem  
Like lonely graveyards of its buried gods.  
My musings went to ages past ; of all  
That these bleached fragments once had seen, I thought.

‘And then again, at the mute hour of midnight,  
When ocean lay at rest in sleep and smiles,  
And the moon woke, to watch the bright repose,  
Scattering its silver o’er the wave like dreams,  
I stood on Sidon’s crumbling fort, and looked  
All round and up the slopes of Lebanon,  
Where to Astartè rose the tainted incense,  
And Syria knelt before her goddess-moon.

‘ The temples of earth’s younger days have fallen ;  
The idol-plain of Shinar is a waste ;  
The colonnades of Baalbec, that for ages  
Like a palm-forest stood, uprooted lie ;  
The columns whitening the green hills of Greece  
Have crumbled ; perished Rome’s four hundred fanes :  
The sea of ages has swept over them ;  
Beneath its waves dead gods and goddesses  
Lie deep entombed,—no one to quicken them,  
Or to relight their long-quenched altar-fires.

‘ And yet I hear of pilgrims in these days,  
These wiser days of spirit and of truth,  
Who do them reverence ; who go to kneel,  
And weep, and love, and worship, waking up  
With pagan litanies the agèd silence,  
Pining for deities long since extinct,  
In which, impersonate, they seem to see  
What man calls nature, and to which he kneels,  
Clasping the idol in his wild embrace  
As if it were the real, or than the real  
More lovable and worthy of his faith ;  
As if in that ideal he had found  
The very spirit of this marvellous seen,  
And yet more marvellous unseen, to which,  
Fondly enamoured, he would wed his soul ;  
To which, enraptured, he would bow the knee,  
As to a goddess-bride, in whose warm eyes  
He would rejoice to find his dreamy heaven.

‘ O youth-hood of the world, earth’s May-day prime,  
To which so many wistful eyes look back,  
How little of the pure and lovable

Perfumes your ancient air, or finds its way  
Into the sunshine of your burning blue !  
What have your molten or your chiselled myths  
Done for the realms who owned them as their creed ?  
How little of the noble or the great  
Has dwelt within the columns of your fanes,  
Or blazed upon your altars ! War and wine  
Were there, with lewdness and with cruelty ;  
Each symbol pander to a lust, or based  
Upon a lie, or some contorted fragment  
Of truth primeval, all defaced and worn.  
Fierce and lascivious were the fumes which filled  
The chambers of your vast unwindowed shrines ;  
Your marble, Parian or Pentelican,  
Blushed at the rites it witnessed ; and your men,  
Oft nobler than the creeds they clung to, looked  
With scorn on wanton deities, who seemed  
To visit earth but to defile its pureness  
With lewdness of their own voluptuous heavens.

‘O era of the gods ! ere Bel had bowed,  
And Nebo gone into captivity ;  
When Egypt worshipped still her nameless Power ;  
Ere yet Ibsambûl was laid desolate,  
Her idols smothered in the Nubian sands,  
And her rock-chiselled niches stripped and spoiled ;  
Ere Elam’s ever-burning fire went out,  
Or Lebanon forgot her Ashtaroth,  
Or Zeus and Herè, from the Olympian peaks,  
Had passed into their kindred nothingness :  
Era of myth and mystery, how blank  
For truth and goodness have your ages been !

Ye fabled deities, what have you done  
To sweeten or dry up the turbid flood  
Of terrene ill? Ah! never have ye gone  
Down to the solemn depths of human conscience,  
To calm the tempest that was raging there;  
No burdens have ye borne, no wrinkles smoothed  
Upon the furrowed front of earthly care;  
Dumb as your statues, and as cold, no words  
To the lone mourner have ye ever spoken,  
No counsels to the wandering have ye given,  
No guidance to the error-tangled step,  
No blanks ye filled, no terrors ye allayed;  
Upon the future ye could shed no hope;  
Upon no deathbed did ye ever shine,  
Making the leaden lip to smile with peace,  
And lighting up with love the heavy eye.  
Rest for the weary ye had none; no love,  
Like that of Him who gave His Son for us,  
Ere spake from you by priest or oracle;  
No cradle-lullaby ye ever sang,  
No mother's tears ye dried; ye could not say  
To your own Niobè in day of grief,  
"Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes  
From tears, for soon thy children shall return;"  
Ye could but change her into stone! No hope ye gave  
Of happy meeting and immortal love  
On a bright shore of life, to which no death  
Shall come, and o'er whose field of peaceful light  
No star malignant shall shoot down its ray.  
No earnest gave ye of a glorious future  
For man and for man's earth, long desolate,

Compensating for disappointment here.  
Poor helpless gods, what have ye done for men,  
Even in these days when all the world was yours,  
Days of humanity's unwasted prime ?  
What stamp of love or pureness have ye left  
Upon that earth o'er which so long ye swayed ?  
When did ye dare the battle-front for truth,  
Or face the flame in fighting error down ?  
Has the grave yielded to your icy touch,  
Or death fled trembling from your sightless eyes ?  
Which of you all has spoken words that live,  
Or done the deeds that tell, or moulded minds  
Into celestial beauty, lifting man  
Above the sensual thought and selfish will ?'

So writes the meditative pen of one  
Whose pleasant fellowship has passed away.  
His youth to many seemed made up of dreams ;  
To those who knew him 'twas one burning thought,  
One passionate purpose, so to live this life  
That earth should be the better for his birth,  
And own him as a son she loved to honour.

It was a noble dream ; and he who dreamed it  
Woke up to noble life, and lived it well.  
He said,—nor did he speak amiss to us,—  
' Think of what one day thou shalt be, and try  
To be to-day what thou shalt one day be.  
Fight on and conquer ; be a power on earth  
Long after thou art gone ; live for all ages.  
Live wisdom, and then speak it ; it will tell :  
The wise words of the wisest sometimes seem  
But folly to the foolish. Not the less

They work their destined work invincibly ;  
Then most a power when man esteems them weakness.  
The fragrant oil-drops from the wrestler's hair,  
When gathered Greece had crowned him conqueror,  
Fell not in vain, but left the odour long,  
Breathing a power upon the multitude  
That quickened them to deeds of worth and greatness.  
He whose good name is lost, is dead and buried ;  
But he whose life, however brief, hath spoken,  
Tho' but the lowest, least articulate tones  
Of blessing to his fellows, never dies.

‘ How strong the ties of kindred and long love,  
How dear the intercourse of heart with heart ;  
Sunny or sorrowful, as each sweet day  
Draws out still more of that which is within !  
Man wishes to be loved,—expects to be so ;  
And yet how few live so as to be loved !  
Each to the other says, “ Come, love me,” yet  
Who among thousands lives the lovable,  
Heart-winning life ? ‘ Tis love that winneth love :  
Words are too often mockers ; gentle deeds  
Knit souls together, fusing into one  
Divided thoughts and hopes, and fears and joys.  
He that would win me must himself be won :  
I know no loving save by being loved ;  
For being loved, we love. Such is the law  
Alike of earth and heaven ; for Him we love  
Who loved us first ; His love engenders ours.

‘ Be sure your shaft is fixed before you draw  
The bow ; then draw, and stint not ; take thine aim.  
Live thou no random life, as if to play

Some time-beguiling game thou camest here,  
Or take thy part in the world's brilliant dance,  
And then depart when the bright crowd breaks up,  
The music quenched and the gay waltzers gone.'

I read and muse, I muse and read again,  
Conversing with the dear or honoured dead.  
These letters are the voices of the loved ;  
And thus may life and death hold intercourse,  
Tho' not by eye or ear or touch, or some  
Ethereal medium, which man may not name  
Except in darkness. For to us they come not ;  
We go to them : we meet them where we oft  
Have met before ; we go into the past,  
To walk and sit beside them as of old.  
What they are now is hidden from our eye ;  
What they once were we know, and into that  
We would each day return, and wander through  
The fields where we so oft have been with them,  
On double wing of memory and love,  
Rejoining those whose lives and ours were once  
But one, and whose departure took away  
Part of ourselves, and left yet more of them  
Behind, deep-treasured, for companionship,  
Hour after hour, to us in silent days  
Of blankness and of solitude, till this  
Strong memory shall lose its strength to name  
The names of love, or until we rejoin  
Those who have thus outrun us in the race  
Of time, and reached, long before us, the goal.  
Out of the eater has come forth the meat,

And from the strong one sweetness ; so to me  
Has the devourer of all mundane things,  
The greatnesses and meannesses of man,  
Left those few shreds behind him, as he swept  
Still on and on in his destructive march,  
Locked up in double safe, like hoarded gold,  
These treasured pages of the loved and lost,  
These self-sketched portraits of their inner being,  
Fragments of once familiar history.

In the great picture-gallery of Time,  
Each child of earth, tho' all unchronicled,  
And unrelated to the wise or high,  
Has some fond niche or shaded corner, where  
He finds some image, which no time can blot,  
Of those who have gone from him, and whose going  
Left his poor dwelling poorer, and himself  
A lonelier man, whose props and fellowships,  
Once fallen to pieces, could not be replaced.  
For few are the replacements of the heart ;  
That which is gone is gone, and no one else  
Can fit into the hollow death has made,  
Or fill up the unmeasured blank within.

Quickly the lacerated air is healed,  
The bolt that pierced it left no scar behind.  
Heart-wounds are only cicatrized to many ;  
The life-long scar shows where the arrow struck,  
The life-long pain betrays the hidden hurt.  
Quickly the sea fills up the hollow where  
The barque went down, and all again is smooth ;  
But in that greater sea, the human heart,  
Shipwreck is shipwreck beyond hope or fear ;

The old fulness comes not, and can never come.  
Swiftly the sky of noon resumes its joy  
When storms exhaust themselves, and clouds have passed;  
But that far wider heaven, man's boundless soul,  
Detains the shadow when the cloud has fled ;  
And in the human hemisphere, the star  
Once lost is lost for ever, till the hour  
Of glad recovery for all true things lost,  
When every stain shall vanish from the blue  
Of our fair life hereafter, and the lights,  
Which went out from our firmament, shall be  
Rekindled there in freshness far beyond  
What eye hath seen in this thick air of time.

The scar remains ; the pain, with most, is past ;  
Few suffer long ; the many fling aside  
Their sharpest grief ; within a few short months,  
Or less, the past is past, the sea is still.—  
Oh, well for them, and yet not well ! I'd rather  
Endure the open wound a lifetime, than  
Part with the memories of these earnest days,  
When I sat face to face with death, and then  
Kissed the last farewell, clasped the marble fingers,  
And saw the soul forsake beloved eyes.

On such departed radiances I muse,  
Still beautiful in their primeval youth ;  
And musing, take up one by one these pages,—  
Soiled with long years, and torn by heedless hands,—  
In which old life comes back again, like corn  
Spilled from the shaken sheaf upon the ground,  
Or like the scatterings of storied glass,  
From dim church window, falling to decay.

Brief episodes of home and love and peace,  
With glimpses of the unforgotten scenes,  
Faces, and names of boyhood, all are here :  
The quiet, or the boisterous overflow  
Of hearts as yet untamed to manhood's rules,  
The first up-wellings of youth's sparkling spring,  
The wild exuberance of the vagrant will  
When first let loose upon a world of smiles,  
Are written, tho' in broken characters,  
By pens long since laid down. Strange pages these,  
O'er which my eye runs swiftly, as I watch  
These sinking stars and this uprising sun,  
That thro' my lattice now begins to pour  
Its brilliance in this solemn summer dawn.

Heaped on this table, in disorder mute,—  
Type of the ravelled coil of memories  
Within myself,—a lifetime's memories,—  
They lie, and bid me listen to their song.

And I am listening ! Not a sound but has  
Its charms, which distance has no power to dull;  
For time but breathes its harmonizing spell  
O'er what was once untunable and harsh,  
Transforming into venerable softness  
Words which, when uttered first, perchance were rude ;  
Making even silence eloquent ; the sweet  
Still sweetening ; the waves of stormy life  
Smoothing into a stable calm, o'er which  
No hurricane again shall ever break.

They say that when the Alpine peak is split  
By frost or lightning, or by grinding time,  
The gems roll out into the vales below,

Making the peasant rich with unbought treasure :  
Even so life's once deep-buried memories  
Uncover all their lustre to the soul,  
Making me richer than I thought or dreamed,  
When time or storm or the sharp frosts of life  
Have severed them from the encrusting mass  
Of present scenes and soul-absorbing cares,  
Which buried them in darkness far within.

Before me passes, disarranged yet clear,  
The vision of man's threescore years and ten ;  
Each day containing in itself a tale  
Told for all ages, and each week a volume ;  
All of them fragments, broken off by time  
From this immortal being, and laid up  
As in a treasure-house, or skilfully  
Embalmed, like Egypt's dead, with spices sweet ;  
Not lost, like vapour vanishing in air,  
Or inurned ashes of a Roman pyre ;  
Not flung aside as waste, but linked with noons  
And nights of our imperishable past,—  
Parts of one being, zones of one round earth,  
Fields of one province, yet in light and shade  
Each differing from the other, none the same ;  
For true life ever varies and is fresh :  
'Tis fancy only that repeats itself,  
Still giving forth a stale monotony  
Of human fictions, substituted for  
Divine creations ever rich and new ;  
Some like plucked flowers, whose fragrance lingers yet  
When the full hues are gone ; some like the flowers  
Whose beauty lingers when the fragrance dies.

As at the keyboard sits the organist,  
And, touching key by key, draws out the store  
Of melody within, or old or new,  
Till from the organ-pipes the massive notes  
Roll out like living gems, so sit I here ;  
And as I touch these fragile finger-keys,  
These scrolls in which a parent or a friend,  
Brother or sister, spoke out all their heart,  
The unexhausted music of the past  
Comes out, and fills the ever-listening soul  
With solemn sweetesses that never pall.

    Into these byways of the sombre past  
We track our way with charts and guides like those  
Which these old letters furnish, and sit down  
Amid the crumbling towers, the grass-paved streets,  
The shattered obelisks of life, once fresh  
In its own radiant prime, as one who walks  
Amid the rock-shrines of old Thebes, or gazes  
On Syria's pillared wrecks, or corridors  
Of proud Sebustè on her hill of vines ;  
Or yet more truly, as one strolling out  
Along the Appian Way, and wandering on,  
Finds on each side, half-buried and half-razed,  
The villa and the tomb of Roman days.

    Amid the thickets of the past we seem  
At times to lose ourselves, yet there we love,  
As we grow older, oftener still to be  
Than in the present ; for to haunts like these  
The famished soul goes back for nourishment  
And comfort in its day of weariness.  
The then and now, how different ! And we,

Unlike our former selves in taste and feeling !  
*Then*, it was with the living all the day  
We lived ; thoughts, hopes, and dreams were all with  
them.

Youth looked at everything with summer eyes,  
And then it seemed that not a leaf could curl,  
Or blossom drop upon the greedy soil.

Few memories had we, and they were sweet ;  
Our past was brief, our future great and fair.

*Now*, with the dead it is we converse hold ;

Our fellowships are on the other side

Of the lone grave, in which so many loves  
And joys lie buried deep. Life seems to us  
Like an old city now, with shattered walls,  
And broken gateways, 'neath whose arches once  
Youth marched in glee, with its gay banners spread,  
To each day's goal of triumph and of song.

O bright processions of the past ! No time  
Can blot you from our memories ! O mirth  
Of boyhood, when the slippery mountain-slope,  
Hot with all July flaming on its rocks,  
Or shaggy with September's brownest fern,  
Welcomed our buoyant steps, as up we climbed  
Cliff above cliff ; or when the lavish sun  
Shook down its autumn gold upon the sea,  
Along whose glowing lip we roamed in joy.

The one-book student is not always wise,  
The untravelled spirit is not often wide ;  
The reader of the false becomes himself  
False as the books he reads. Light cometh not  
To him who loves the dark. Let us spread out

Our souls among the many and the true,  
Or books or lives, that we may be as they,  
In life and thought alike large-souled and wise ;  
Not cast in one stiff mould, but wide and free ;  
Wide as the widest truth, and free as day  
In the pure stretch of its unmeasured sunshine,  
Owning no bound save that which God has set.  
Our vision's limit should be, not the clouds  
Of earth, but the wide heaven, or wider still,  
The circle of immeasurable space,  
Into whose calmness of unfathomed distance  
Some trembling star, all but invisible  
In the far offing, beckons our slow eyes.  
Whence the truth comes, or how, we need not care :  
Be it but truth, 'tis welcome. What lips spoke,  
What fingers penned it, heed not. Is it true ?  
Let it come in, then, and abide with us.  
Blessèd the roof that kindly gives it shelter !  
Ask not the good man's pedigree ; he may  
Be without name or title, poor in all  
That the proud world calls noble in descent,  
Yet may his ancestry and heritage  
Be old and heavenly. Take him for what he is,  
Think not of what he is not ; it may be  
Thou shalt receive an angel unawares.

It is the tiller of the ground that keeps  
The world in life, and makes it what it is.  
Poor as he may be, from his daily sweat  
The wealth of nations springs, and his rough hands  
Wield sceptres, steer our navies, and command  
Our armies, sign our treaties, make our laws,

Sheathe or unsheathe the sword, to overthrow  
Or reconstruct the empires of the earth.  
And yet who thinks of him, or knows his name,  
Or asks his pedigree ? The hard and sore  
But useful work that tells upon the world  
Is done by unknown men, who find no fame,  
Yet without whom the men of name and honour  
That fill the untrue annals of our race  
Would all have lived in vain. The great ones die,  
And the wide nations weep ; fair monuments  
Arise in every city. Those obscure,  
Hard-toiling men, whose eyes grew early dim,  
Die and are buried where their fathers lie ;  
The crowd moves on above them, and the world,  
Noisy and ignorant, and mad with lust  
Of gold, knows not how poor it has become.

No one has seen to-morrow, and from it  
No lessons come. It may be full of wisdom,  
Yet, till it comes, the wisdom cannot come.  
All have seen yesterday, and out of it  
And its long fellow-yesterdays which we  
Have known, the lofty light and knowledge rise.  
Say what men will, antiquity is power ;  
The light of long-set suns is gleaming still  
Upon the furrows of its awful peaks.  
Call it the youth of time, as some have done,  
Yet they who dwelt in it were men of thought  
As well as we, and men of mellow minds,  
Who had outgrown their nonage, and could speak  
As only they can do whom time has taught.

The pyramids are Egypt's, but to all

The world belong the everlasting hills.  
Children of time are we ; its stores are ours,  
The centuries are ours which have flowed out,  
Drop after drop, since man was on the earth.  
Both good and ill, both true and false are there,  
Yet are they not like drops which in an hour  
Exhale and leave no vestige of their being,  
But rather like the stars, which one by one  
Come forth and shine for ever, or with good  
Or evil influence on each following age ;  
Or like the deep-stored mines, whose precious ore  
Has been depositing itself for ages,  
To be the unexhausted wealth of kingdoms.  
Ours must it be to treasure up the gold  
And fling the dross away ; to separate  
The shadow from the substance, and to dig  
In every mine of the long-buried past ;  
To glean with eager and impartial hand  
In every field where truth has found a home.  
He who is bound to learn is bound to teach,  
The Jewish fathers said ; and it is well.  
Let us, then, daily learn, that we may teach ;  
And let us daily teach, that we may learn.

Yet 'tis but little of earth's history  
That bears recording ; greater part by far  
Fit for oblivion : for one flowery nook,  
Miles of rank weeds ; for one shining gem,  
Long fields of dross. I look behind, and see  
The dark deposits of the centuries,  
The strata of the ages, as they flowed  
And ebbed, precipitating, deep and foul,

Layer upon layer of human sin, spread out  
In loathsome crust upon this passive earth.

Fountain of light ! this confused world of ours  
Is full of mist and peril everywhere ;  
Wilt Thou not send the light for which it sighs ?  
Radiance we ask beyond what man can give,  
To turn our winter into spring and flowers.  
Sunshine with all its splendour cannot loose  
The bonds of frost : even so philosophy,  
Highest and purest, shines, but shines in vain ;  
It melts not, heals not, filleth up no void,  
Nor breaks the iron chain, nor purges evil,  
Nor makes the human spirit free and holy,  
Possessor of a wingèd hope that goes  
Above the peaks of these ambitious hills,  
Beyond the sparkle of these lofty stars.

The sun is silent : it gives deeds not words  
For blessing ; and no voice of eloquence  
Or song comes from it ; day by day it pours  
Its mute vitality o'er earth ; and yet  
That soundless sunbeam, in its gentleness,  
Is the great power for motion and for life,  
The strength of strength, resistless in its stillness ;  
Type of omnipotence, which silently  
Rules heaven and earth. From that calm orb  
above  
Comes down the fruitfulness of vale and hill ;  
It clothes the mountains with their tranquil green ;  
The rivers have in it their lustrous source ;  
The sky drinks in its sapphire, and the sea  
Smiles in its smile ; the forests own its touch ;

It weaves the rainbow with its cunning hand,  
A garland for the clouds, out of the dark  
Evoking light and beauty. Ere man was,  
It had prepared for him this fertile globe,  
And stored its deepest regions with provision  
For the great race that was to dwell on it,  
The wealth, the fuel, and the fruitfulness ;  
Its very rocks replete with hoarded light.  
And He who, in His all-foreseeing love,  
Set in the firmament that mighty sun,  
Filled its benignant beams with life for man  
And man's new world, the last and loveliest  
Of the Creator's handiworks, whose soil  
Was, in the fulness of the times, to be  
The clay in which the eternal Son of God,  
The Word made flesh, was yet to wrap Himself,  
When He came down to live a human life  
And die a human death, that life, not death,  
Might be the heritage of sinning man.

O constant rain of God, which, day by day,  
So mutely fallest on the eager earth,—  
Not in cold showers, like that which men call rain,  
But in unceasing tho' invisible drops,  
Like a warm dew, both day and night distilling,—  
Water this soul of mine ! O heavenly breeze,  
Blow where thou listest, blow, invisible,  
But not inaudible ! We hear the sound,  
Yet know not whence it comes, or to what part  
It goes,—all uncontrollable by man,  
Mysterious in its motions, and obeying  
In its strange rise and fall, its ebb and flow,

A law and will beyond man's will and law,  
Yet not the less beneficent and real.  
Blow, blessed breeze ! Descend, persuasive rain,  
In fruitful fulness ! Hasten the long spring  
And longer summer of this waiting world !  
Full sorely does this day of varied ill,  
That knoweth not its own infirmities,  
Need all your fulness, double fount of life  
Celestial ; for earth is out of course ;  
Some universal solvent is at work,  
And the old social fabric falls to pieces  
Beneath its penetrating influence.  
Destroy, disintegrate, and overthrow,—  
This is the watchword of a restless time,  
Which to rebuild and reconsolidate  
Has not the will nor wisdom ; 'tis the age  
Of the destroyer, not the architect.

Wake, sleeping seeds of all the ages past,  
And send up thro' the soil that long has hid you,  
Your blade and blossom ! Wake, and sleep no more !  
We need you now ; awake, arise, and bloom,  
Let loose your odours thro' the sighing air,  
And turn its sighs to sweetness and to love.

There be four races of what men call flowers,—  
Four families of beauty, that have been,  
Or are, or yet shall be ; and all divine :  
Flowers of a Paradise above, that ne'er  
Has been or shall be lost, for ever fair,  
For ever fragrant, in yon heaven of heavens ;  
Flowers of a garden planted once on earth,  
But blighted by the serpent's hateful slime ;

Flowers of a fallen soil, that might have been  
One lovesome Eden, had no taint of sin,  
Like shadow of an evil angel's wing,  
Fallen on its budding beauty, shrivelling  
Its noble youth into a quick decay ;  
Flowers of a Paradise that has not yet  
Been seen on earth, but one day shall be here,  
And for whose coming we with hopeful heart  
Wait amid all this death, expecting then  
God's re-donation of His primal gift  
To man, of His fair earth and gracious sky.

The sun is rising, and the nimble night  
Hastes to be gone, as fleeing from his blaze,  
With her affrighted host ; now beaming day  
Is dawning thro' the night-long mists of time ;  
The poisonous vapours of a tainted soil,  
Where evil has so deeply struck its roots,  
Are vanishing in incense ; discord dies,  
And harmony, like heaven's, comes in its room ;  
The long dark tunnel of the ages, filled  
With sounds too sorrowful for angels' ears,  
Thro' which we have been passing, endeth now,  
And we emerge into a sun-bright noon.  
God taketh His own time, and hasteth not :  
His rest is motion, and His motion rest ;  
He waiteth on His laws, they wait on Him.

But I am wandering from my briefs, and yet  
Thoughts such as these come up as I recall  
Events and scenes and names recorded there.  
Things live again that seemed for ever dead ;

The graves of great men have immortal voices,  
And even meaner tombs have much to say,  
Would we but listen to their humbler words,—  
Humbler, yet not less true and pure and noble.  
The whole wide earth, and not one realm alone,  
As the great Greek once said, is sepulchre  
For noble men ; and yet the quiet tomb,  
In the lone glen, of the more lowly good,  
Without a monument or epitaph,  
Invites the pilgrim's step and wins his soul.

Here fold I up my pages for an hour,  
And walk abroad into the free blue air.  
This is the shade of shades, no shadow like it,  
Beneath the beech's over-bending boughs.  
The ever-welling spring bursts blithely forth,  
Drenching the long and pendent grass beneath ;  
O'er us the noon-birds carol lovingly,  
And the bee swings itself from bloom to bloom ;  
Far through the shaken foliage gleams the lake,  
Light on its clear broad brow. One page I take  
Of these old scrolls, and read it as I sit  
Or wander 'neath the shade ; and thus it speaks  
Of the great works which solitary men  
Have done for God, for country, and for earth.

‘ Right in the face of storm the lightning goes,  
With its one fork of terror and of power,  
Fronting, not fleeing from nor following,  
The blast that levels woods and lifts the waves ;  
Like a skilled warrior brandishing his sword,  
And bringing down its edge upon some giant,

Hewing his way thro' power and bulk and fierceness ;  
So let us with the sword of God-given truth,  
Face foe on foe, as if to us alone  
Were given the sword that is to save the world,  
To sweep the spoiler from the earth, and win  
The everlasting victory of time.

‘ See how the past gleams everywhere afar,  
With single swords unsheathed and waved aloft,  
When all around are scabbarded and rusting !  
See how the deeds that make up history,  
The works that tell on nations, have been done  
By single arms and solitary souls !  
See how the words that have rung thro’ the eras,  
Made kingdoms stand in awe, and carried health  
To palsied peoples, making dead men live,  
Have issued not from crowds, but lonely voices !  
Not pomp, nor gold, nor numbers have been honoured  
To do the works or speak the words of God.  
‘Tis the one master-wheel that moves the mill,  
The rest do only what the master bids them.  
The multitude may do the little things  
Of hourly history ; the great are done  
By lonely men, the Prophet or the Judge,  
Who take their mission straight from Him whose word  
They come to do ;—the prophet-child of Ramah,  
Or he of Gilead in rough raiment clad,  
Gideon or Jephthah, or the Maccabee  
Of Modin, when, like giant from the hills  
Of Dan descending, in his warrior-strength  
He shivered the proud Syrian sword and shield,  
And lifted fallen Israel from the dust.

‘ Thus, when God loves a people, and would save  
A shipwrecked kingdom from the waves and rocks,  
He for Himself creates some son of might,  
And sends him forth with the delivering sword ;—  
Some man, till then unknown, till then uncrowned,  
From out the common crowd of citizens ;—  
Some man of strength, like England’s yeoman, who  
In evil days, when storm went thro’ the realm  
And threatened universal shipwreck, took,  
In the calm consciousness of power to rule,  
The stroke-oar of the giddy reeling empire,  
Steadied the barque, cheered the desponding crew,  
And brought its creaking timbers to the strand,  
To be refitted by the skill that saved it ;—  
Some man of thought, like Bacon, rising up  
In strength of chastened intellect and love,  
Moulded and mellowed by the God-given truth,  
To which he has submitted his large soul,  
And in which he has steeped his varied being ;  
He shines in darkness, and sends on his light  
To after ages, setting free the mind  
Of a great realm from bondage of the past,  
Heading the storm, not yielding to the gale,  
Speaking with thunder-voice, and yet with head  
All reverently bowed before a voice  
Mightier and more majestic than his own.  
His words go thro’ the land, like arrows keen,  
Feathered with lightning ; and they carry life,  
Not death and wounds ; they fill the nation’s veins  
With renovated health, the gift of Heaven.

‘ The lower millstone, tho’ it moveth not,

Grindeth as truly as the upper grinds.  
Let us but know our place, our work, our time,  
And all is well. It is the mis-timed life  
That fails, and wastes itself in efforts vain,  
Like ship without a pilot or a helm.

‘One in an age they rise and pass away ;  
One in a nation they come forth and stand  
Above their fellows, mighty men, but meek,  
Noble, yet patient ; conscious of an errand  
Which must be done, whoever may oppose ;  
Big with an inspiration not of earth ;  
Charged with a message to the sons of men,  
Which must be spoken out before they die.

‘What will it be when all these sons of fame,  
The peerage of the ages, shall sit down  
Together, in a day that yet shall come,  
And, welcoming each other, shall recount  
The annals of their age, as they have known  
And acted them, themselves its history ?  
What will that feast-board be, and what that hall,  
Where they who have obtained the good report  
Shall meet together in one holy band,  
And tell the tale of earth from the beginning,  
Revealing all the hidden springs of thought  
And speech and action to each other there ?

‘The stars have looked each other in the face  
For ages, yet have never met ; the peaks  
Of the far-severed and all-stedfast hills  
Have, with their mitres of eternal snow,  
Gazed on each other, yet remained apart.  
The winds and waves and clouds embrace each other ;

Earth's universal network of clear streams  
Is one sweet fellowship of many climes,  
But stars and peaks remain unlinked and lone.

'So is it now ; what it may be hereafter,  
We know not : what the endless fellowships  
And close-linked companies of bright and great  
One day may be, we cannot tell ; nor yet  
How soon, from the tall turret-clock of time,  
Shall sound the signal which must gather all  
The light-begotten children of the one  
Great family of light, to the bright joy  
Of the one festival which cannot end.'

Thus ends the page. I fold it up, and quit  
The leafy shade, returning home ; and as  
I go, I gather up the thought, and say,  
Yes, it is even so ; but yet the veil  
Before the patient future still remains.

All earthly things end in their opposites,  
And to their opposites give silent birth :  
Night ends in day, and day in night again ;  
Life begets death, and death begetteth life.  
All things revolve, and back into themselves  
Return ; as the clouds fill the streams, the streams  
The sea, the sea the clouds, all circling round.

As yet the age of constancy and progress  
Lingers upon its way to us,—the day  
When life shall rise into a nobler life,  
And brightness shall give only place to that  
Which is yet brighter ; when the daily flowers,  
Instead of blanching, shall take on fresh hues,  
And earth grow ever greener ; when the circle

Of joy and grief, which maketh up to man  
His annual orbit here, shall be unknown ;  
When sleep shall be a glorious trance, and dreams  
All Bethel-visions ; when no wakeful night  
With its alarms shall make the watcher say,  
When shall this tossing weariness be gone ?  
When all life's neutral tints shall flush into  
The rich and brilliant hues of endless health,  
When no dim future, no dark dread of change,  
No fear of broken links and ended love,  
And shadowy sick-bed and the greedy tomb,  
Shall burden the bright hours of songful noon ;  
When all shall be ascent, and still ascent,  
One happy cycle of unchanging day ;  
No settings more, save those by which the stars  
Die in the sunlight and are lost in dawn.

## BOOK III.

---

‘YES, of myself shall be my song to-day.’  
Thus long since wrote the friend of other years,  
Who, in the prime of promise and of joy,  
Left us to win dear health in kindlier climes,  
And to seek wider range of spirit where  
New scenes and men call out new thought and feeling ;  
Pitching his tent beneath less wayward skies,  
‘Mid breezes more benignant than his own :  
Now in the classic East afar, to pluck  
Ionian violets, sweetest of the sweet ;  
Or by the rock of Hissarlik, to watch  
How the flocks graze upon old Priam’s tomb ;  
Now upon Nizza’s mountain-girdled plain,  
Now by the crescent of calm Spezia’s bay ;  
Or by the banks of Arno, underneath  
The laurels of the laurelled city, where  
Wisdom and art and song in ages past  
Held more than regal sway ; again amid  
Rome’s labyrinth of temples and of tombs ;  
Now by the cliffs from which Amalfi smiles,  
Thro’ her vine-clustered columns of fair marble,  
O’er the Salernian gulf and Tyrrhene sea ;  
Now on the steeps of the Euganean hills,

To breathe old Arqua's everlasting spring,  
And bid the nightingale, whose songs are dreams,  
Sing to the stars its love-begotten lay ;  
Or on some Umbrian slope, upon the marge  
Of Nera or Clitumnus, as they wind  
Thro' Sabine pastures, ere they link themselves  
With Tuscan Tiber on its way to Rome ;  
Now by the plain where, desolate and lone,  
Reft of its roses, Pæstum sleeps its sleep,  
Still shadowed by its snowy Apennine  
(Its double harvest now of thorns alone)  
'Mid its three solemn ruins ; or beside  
The dead wolf-city of the Libyan hills ;  
Or in the southern vales of ruined Spain,  
Twin-sister of the African Sahara,  
Where, by the wingèd Darro, the Alhambra,  
Half palace and half fortress, rears its pride,  
Hard by the hill famed in Iberian song,—  
Granada's hill, place of the Moor's last sigh,  
Where in the silence of suppressed despair  
He bade farewell to his beloved Spain ;  
Or underneath fair Jaffa's orange-blooms,  
Or the long slope of fragrant Lebanon,  
Where old Phœnicia with her daughters dwelt,—  
Sidon and Arvad and Berytus fair,  
And Tyre, the city of the island-rock,  
Queen of the seas ere Rome had found a name,  
Or Argos sent its thousand-galleyed fleet  
Against the towers of wind-swept Ilion.

‘ Yes, of myself shall be my song to-day,  
As I sit here in pleasant loneliness,

Village and city left alike behind,  
And nought of man within the reach of ear  
Or eye, save yon far sail or rising smoke,  
While dawn is making ready to come up  
Behind that sea, upon whose mirror meet  
Noon's first and night's last gleams,—a sea as calm  
As that on which the lion of St. Mark's  
Has for six centuries looked mutely down.  
How real at this fresh hour all nature seems !  
This stillness is reality itself,—  
Reality without a voice or sound !  
How real this night has been, and these clear orbs,  
That just have passed in beauty out of sight !  
This dawn, how real, tho' shadows sweep its sky ;  
This star-girt earth, and this mysterious air  
In which it swims, and these perpetual ripples,  
That roll themselves in childlike sport upon  
The sand and shingle of this rock-fenced bay !  
The very silence of the sea takes voice,  
And speaks old music that has slumbered there  
Since Orpheus flung his lyre upon the waves.  
All things around me and above,—the peak  
That wears upon its shoulders like a robe  
That dreamy mist, and these substantial clouds ;  
That boulder by the stream, these pines that bend  
To the slow breath of dawn, tho' not unused  
To the rude turbulence of angry winds,  
Are true. No night-begotten fantasies  
Are these, no visions of the sick or idle ;  
No mythic phantom is this noble cliff,  
That drops its shadow on yon sloping strand ;

No fable is yon ever-singing brook,  
Whose murmur is the music of the morn,  
Whose sparkling silver, like a luminous cord,  
Binds while it braids the many-coloured robe  
Of that green vale below, which seems to clasp  
All summer in its arms ; no dreamer's dream  
The tremulous verdure of yon winding wood,  
Dripping with dew and sunshine ; nor these flowers,  
Which like low melodies fill all the air  
With happy fragrance, each new-bursting bud  
A beauty and a gladness and a song.  
This circling atmosphere, in calm or storm,  
With its great navies of slow-sailing clouds,  
Some pure as snowy Alp, some rich with hues  
Which never came from earth, some red, as if  
Flushed with the fiery thunder from afar ;  
The silent footfalls of the quiet stars,  
Moving in measured grace across the blue  
All the night long, how true they seem to me !  
And yet this throbbing dawn with its new life,  
That vibrates wide and far, seems truer still ;  
For night is feeble and the day is strong,  
Midnight relaxes and the morn restores.  
I walk abroad beneath the quickening light,  
And make its strength my own. O mighty sunrise,  
How have I loved you, and with a deep  
Intensity of spirit drunk your joy !  
I see the day approaching when that sun  
Shall cease to scorch, but never cease to shine !  
‘ Amid the thoughts of hollow unbelief,  
That would turn all to fable, I would grasp

These genuine things of nature, and would feel  
How real is this universe, unseen  
Or seen, impalpable or palpable ;  
How much more real He from whom it came,  
And who inhabits its prolific space !  
What though a shadow falleth everywhere ?  
The shadow tells me that the sun is up,  
The unclouded sun, and that the night is gone ;  
For it is light that casts the shadow, and  
I know that where it is the truth must be.

‘ Faith’s vision is the vision of the real ;  
The true and the enduring are the things  
We see not, for the supernatural  
Hangs over and around us in these skies.  
That which we see and hear and touch is not  
The all of being, and outside this sphere  
Of our poor vision there are other realms  
And other beings truer still than these.  
Yet ’tis not mystery, but that which lies,  
Clear or less clear, within its golden mist  
Enshrined, that the soul longs for, and with which  
Alone its longings can be satisfied.  
’Tis not the veil, but the invisible shrine,  
The home of the Unsearchable beyond,  
That the soul yearneth for,—a strange true world,  
Far off yet also near, and intermixed  
With ours, where the good angels go and come,  
And which with the invisible majesty  
Of an all-present Power is filled throughout.

‘ The untrue liveth only in the heart  
Of vain humanity, which fain would be

Its own poor centre and circumference,  
Smiling or scowling at the name of aught  
Beyond the narrow circle of the sense,  
As visions of the visionary soul,  
As follies of the weak and credulous.

For men believe but what they wish, no more ;  
And their profoundest creed is built on doubt :  
With them all unbelief is honesty,  
And all belief but weakness or pretence.

‘ To creaturehood belongeth poverty,  
Failure, and hollowness ; to God alone  
Pertains the perfect and the ever-true.

’Tis He who without voice can speak to us,  
And who without our voice can hear us speak.  
Once did I hear a faint lip whisper thus,  
Yet hardly speaking, for the words were low,—  
“ God of the light, illuminate this gloom !

The light is Thine, and I Thy creature need it ;  
Share it with me ! In Thee is light enough  
For widest creaturehood ; Thou canst not grudge  
One beam to this dim soul ; and that one beam,  
What would it not accomplish ? Thou couldst give it ;  
Thou wouldst not miss it, nor would Thy fair heaven  
Be dimmer for the gift, nor would Thy angels  
Feel as if thus they had been robbed of light ;  
Nor would one eye above less brightly sparkle  
Because another eye below was glad.  
Enough for me, whatever ills might come,  
Would that soft beam of Thine for ever prove ;  
And this dark atom of creation, as  
I feel myself to be, would give Thee praise.

Giver of light, oh, give that light to me !  
I look above me, and I see each night  
Squadrons of beaming orbs all marshalled yonder,  
Millions of suns, with light enough for all  
This infinite universe ;—oh, is there not  
In Him who kindled them, and keeps them still  
Blazing undimmed, enough of light for me ?”

‘ Another voice I heard, less faint and low,  
Of one who sought the true, and seeking found it ;  
Who wooed fair knowledge as a heavenly bride,  
Nor wooed in vain ; who, taking straight his way  
To the one Fountain-head of truth, to Him  
Who giveth largely and upbraideth not,  
Was taught by Him who could not teach amiss.  
Conscious of pain and ill, but above all  
Of the deep void within an unfilled heart,  
He sought for fulness, and the fulness flowed,—  
Bread for a famished spirit, and it came ;  
For He who, as each yellow August shows  
Its empty barns, fills them all up anew  
For winter’s hunger, unsolicited,  
Pours the immortal food into the soul,  
That, in the winter of its famine, asks  
Of Him the living and eternal bread.  
The voice I heard in its strong pleading said :  
“ Oh, pity this my aching hollowness ;  
Strip me of the unreal and untrue,  
And show me Him, the infinitely real,  
Who said not, I am *thought*, but, I am *truth* ;  
Who said not, I am *power*, but, I am *love*.  
’Tis an untruthful world in which I live ;

Duped, disappointed, cheated I must be,  
If I with it am one, and take my part  
Amid its mockeries of gold and wine.

“Out from a hollow world I would pass up  
To Thee in whom I live and move and am.  
Being of beings, I was made for Thee :  
Life is not life, and love is but a dream,  
Apart from Thee. O Spirit wise and good,  
Make conquest of my will ; let thy soft chains  
Bind me with double bond of love and power.  
Enter and reign within ; fill up my being ;  
Then am I true and real ; I am myself,  
And not another, as I hitherto  
Too oft have been ! Then drink I in the health  
And freedom of the liberating cross.  
Pluck up each root of bitterness, and make  
Each plant of sweetness to grow up within me.  
Oh, drench me deeply in Thy heavenly dew,  
That night and morning droppeth sweetly down  
On weary spirits from Thy blessed heaven,  
Like breath of angels in their ministry.  
The current of the world is swift and strong ;  
I cannot front it, save with Thee to help.  
This world is not upon the side of good,  
And fair truth feebly fights its onward way  
Thro’ hostile millions, sworn to fight it down ;  
Error but slowly quits the field, and lurks  
In every thicket in its sullen flight.  
Thy ways are labyrinths, Thy purposes  
Are dark, and in their evolution slow,  
And hard to be interpreted ; this soil

Strewn with a cold confusion everywhere,  
The evil and the good mixed up together,  
The truth and falsehood working side by side,  
Until the day of final severance!"

'To error and to evil men bid welcome,  
As to old friends, and unbelief sits down  
At table of the rich and poor alike,  
A pleasant guest, and maketh mirth for all  
Above the grave of truth, with jest and song.  
The honesties of earth fall sick and die ;  
And men for place or fame, or viler gold,  
Subscribe what they believe not, hiding deep  
What they believe. The old nobilities  
Of lofty life and simple courtesy  
Forsake the earth ; Truth falleth in the streets,  
And no man stoops to raise her from the ground.  
Fall, mighty Truth ; thou shalt not lie for ever,  
Nor moulder, where thou fallest, into dust !  
The clouds are higher than the hills, above  
The clouds the planets wander, and beyond  
These kinsmen of this globe, the holy stars  
Walk in their purity : all these may die,  
Hills, clouds, stars, planets, but thou diest not ;  
No one has seen thy monument, nor shall.

'O awful silence of the Eternal One,  
Who sits above and sees all this below,  
Yet sees as if He saw not, hears as if  
He heard not !—And the good tries hard to rise,  
Yet sinks, like little waves far out at sea ;  
Or specks that in the sky like rain-clouds look,  
Yet pass without a shower for the parched earth.

O Thou who sidest with the weak against  
The strong, reveal Thyself at length, and show  
Thyself upon the side of good, and tell  
The world what goodness is, and what is truth.  
Tell me meanwhile that which I long to know,  
More and yet more of the true things of which  
Thou art the root and treasure-house, that I  
May scatter round me the eternal seed,  
And make earth better for my being here.  
Teach me, each moment that I live, some deep  
And sacred lesson, that I may not live  
In vain, nor curse the day that I was born,  
Bearing the burden of a useless life.  
Oh, tune me, mould me, mellow me for use ;  
Pervade my being with Thy vital force,  
That this else inexpressive life of mine  
May become eloquent and full of power,  
Impregnated with life and strength divine.  
Put the bright torch of heaven into my hand,  
That I may carry it aloft, and win  
The weary eyes of wanderers here below,  
To guide their feet into the way of peace.  
I cannot raise the dead, nor from this soil  
Pluck precious dust, nor bid the sleepers wake ;  
Nor still the storm, nor bend the lightning back,  
Nor muffle up the thunder, lest its roar  
Should break the rest of my sick sleeping boy ;  
Nor bind the Evil One, nor bid the chain  
Fall from creation's long-enfettered limbs,  
To make all nature free as at the first,  
And beautiful as free ; but I can live

A life that tells on other lives, and makes  
This world less full of evil and of pain,—  
A life which, like a pebble dropped at sea,  
Sends its wide circles to a hundred shores.  
Let such be mine! Creator of true life!—  
Thyself the life Thou givest, give Thyself,  
That Thou mayst dwell in me, and I in Thee.

‘I’ve been a dreamer, and I’ve seen the fields  
Where the peace-roses blossom, and I know  
Where the love-violets breathe their matchless sweets  
Into the luscious air. It is a place  
To which our tainted sunshine finds no way.  
Beneath the cross they grow, and, gently freshened  
By a bright river whose deep-hidden fount  
Earth knoweth not, they spring, and bud, and bloom,  
But never die. Thither I’ll go, and thence  
Bring peace and love to a distempered age.  
I in my very weakness will be power,  
Drawing the living lightning from a sky  
Beyond these clouds of time, and making thus  
The world my debtor ere I pass away.

‘What tho’ I fall upon the battle-plain,  
My work unfinished? Let me not despond,  
As if the warfare had been waged for nought,  
And I, with all my toil, had lived in vain.  
The bravest take the front and are cut down,  
Nor weeps the mother of a timid son;  
Yet in their fall they conquer for all ages,  
And their unfinished fight has gained, not one,  
But many a battle for the struggling earth.  
At death our doing of the work is o’er,

But the work done remains,—endures for ever.  
We go, but that which we have done lives on,  
And bears its proper fruitage after us.  
We are the leaf and blossom ; we must die,  
And in our dying bring forth higher life.

‘Not what we see or hear alone is real;  
There is an inner being, which with all  
Its joys and griefs, its tempests and its calms,  
Is yet more real than this palpable,  
In which man’s science works, to which his eye  
Turns for the beautiful, round which his mind  
Revolves as round his true and proper pole.

‘What is the weariness that oft weighs down  
This o’erwrought frame ? I see it not, nor hear ;  
Yet it is here, pervading brain and limb.  
What is this bitterness that breaks the heart  
When the inexorable grave has claimed  
The loved or honoured ? ’Tis as sternly true  
As the sword-wound dismembering the flesh.  
Shall I say mockingly to my torn heart,  
Grieve thou no more ? Or to my heavy eyes,  
Weep not ; as if my tears had been mere weakness  
And my grief folly, idly lavished on  
A phantom which a wise man may despise,  
And which a brave man should not fear to face ?

‘Not what is present is the only real.  
Next July’s sun and next December’s snows  
Will not be more ideal than the past.  
June will bring roses ; let us patiently  
Wait on, for June will come, and with it come  
Roses as fair as those once sung of old

By Teian or by Venusian bard.  
To-day will die, but with it will not die  
That which is real. To-morrow will come up,  
With all its inner and its outer circles,  
With its still throbbing pulses, swift or slow,  
Of seen and unseen life ; nay, far beyond  
What we call death, the same reality  
Unfolds itself hereafter ; there are realms  
Stretching between us and the seat of God,  
The depths and heights of which no mortal line  
Has ever compassed. Science plumes her wing,  
And moves from star to star, from sun to sun,  
Measuring all visible distance, making known  
The secrets of each orb, and spreading out  
In sevenfold splendour every ray of light,  
Like golden casket with its burning gems,  
Discoursing of its riches and its power.  
There is a land beyond these beaming orbs,  
These pilgrims of the million-peopled sky,  
Into which science has no entrance found,  
In which she celebrates no victories,  
And which she therefore would pronounce untrue,  
A waste without a dweller or a tent,  
A nebulous continent like that which rises  
After the desert shower upon the sands  
Of Arabah or Ramleh, named Sherâb  
By the dark rangers of the wilderness.  
There is a land beyond this girdling air,  
A land which only He who has passed thro',  
Or who has dwelt in it, can tell us of.  
This globe of ours is not the goodliest

That navigates the immeasurable sea  
Which men call space,—that ever silent sea,  
Across whose awful face no tempest breaks,  
Without a bottom and without a shore.

He is no dreamer of vain dreams who says  
There must be something higher and more perfect  
Than what we see around us, purer far  
Than this stained life of ours, more blessed still  
Than what we here call blessedness. The God

Who made us and our world is not so poor  
In wisdom or in power, as to exhaust  
His treasure-house upon our little world.

If there be then an earth, why not a heaven?

If man has here upon this kindred ground  
A palace or a dwelling for himself,  
Why may not then the great Creator build  
A nobler mansion for Himself, to which  
He may invite the creature He has made?

To whom meanwhile He gives this poorer earth,  
The birth-place and the cradle of a greatness  
Which eye hath not yet seen nor ear hath heard.

‘ He who in name of grave philosophy  
Smiles at my Paradise, yet with fond ear  
Listens while Virgil, in his flowing verse,  
Sings of Elysium and its fields of green,  
But shows himself perverse and credulous,  
Child of an unbelief to which the fabled  
Is welcome as a refuge from the true.

‘ He who in name of reason or of science  
Calls me a dreamer, and my heaven a dream,  
Or tells me that I need not look beyond

These hills of time, that sweep of burnished sapphire,  
With all its moving and unmoving orbs,  
Or the unfathomed and far-sounding sea,  
For knowledge or for joy,—he mocks my spirit,  
Quenches my hope, and casts me to the ground :  
He is as one who flings a withering frost  
O'er a fresh-blossomed orchard, or as one  
Who turns soft music into discord harsh,  
Or into stone transforms some beating heart.  
He would surround this wondrous life of ours  
With fabulous nothings, making faith a lie,  
And hope a cloud just passing into air.  
He bids me call this world a prison-house,  
Girt round with walls which I can never scale,  
Without a gate at which I may go forth  
To seek and find a wider, truer home,  
Nearer the seat of Him whom I call God,  
Maker of all, and higher in the rank  
Of that creation wherewith He has filled  
His pregnant universe, whose measure is  
Spacious infinitude, which lovingly  
Clasps in its crystal and invisible casket  
The works of Him who filleth all in all.

‘ No cloudland yonder mocks the trustful gaze,  
And no illusion cheats the groping hand,  
Or the bewildered spirit ; all is true !  
No night, with its dark billows from afar,  
Like a vast sea, rolls in upon the day.  
There lies the realm of verity, from which  
All falsehood and uncertainty have fled,  
Like tremulous mist before the absorbing sun.

Beyond the subtleties of misbelief,  
Or the enigmas of entangled thought,  
Or anxious throbs of the unresting heart,  
That trembles at its own ambiguous echoes,  
Stretches the calm expanse of light divine.

‘ There dreams can never come, and fantasies  
Of human intellect can find no place ;  
But there the certain and authentic dwell.  
Escaped the meshes of imprisoning doubt,  
That dragged to earth the spirit’s eagle wing,  
We soar into pure liberty of vision,  
And rest upon the high eternal peaks,  
Round which no cloud can ever draw its veil  
To hide the true from our impatient eye.  
No oscillations of unsettled faith,  
Eager to speculate, and counting doubt  
The badge of mind’s nobility, the test  
Of mental breadth and honesty and greatness ;  
No mazes of perturbed or ravelled reason ;  
No visionary guesses, dark or sunny ;  
No insincerities nor empty creeds ;  
No frozen dogmas nor unreal words,  
Whose hollow notes moan madly thro’ the soul :  
But where “ we know,” “ we see,” and “ we are sure,”  
Is the unfaltering tone of happy hearts,  
Who, after years of drifting to and fro  
On the rough Euxine of this wayward life,  
Have found their everlasting anchorage  
In the calm bay, round which the eternal hills  
Rise with their girdle of celestial green.

‘ Like clouds that have no anchor and no helm,

No chart nor pilot to direct their prow,  
How many noble hearts, that might have blest  
The world, and found rich blessing for themselves,  
Sweep o'er life's surging sea without an aim !  
Some sleep their years away, as if becalmed ;  
Some rush before the gale, and wreck themselves  
Upon an unknown coast ; some round and round,  
As in a maddening maelstrom, fancy-lured,  
Whirl without end, until their barque goes down ;  
Some set their sails for a far land of gold,  
And die amid its gems ; some court the storm,  
And steer into its bosom ; some lie down  
And watch the lightning as it spends its fire  
Upon the rock, or quenches its quick glow  
In the dark trough of the absorbing wave.  
To such the present and the seen are all ;  
Beyond the circle of the eye and ear  
All is a void, unpeopled and profound ;  
Nothing exists save darkness, into which  
They are to pass, as all have done before,  
With shuddering step, when this illusive life  
Goes down beneath them, and that wrecker Death  
Flings them upon a shore of nothingness,  
Themselves a vapour, a dim wreath of smoke,  
The shadow of a shade, dissolved for ever.

‘ O labyrinth of life, the bitter-sweet,  
Which all have tasted save the happy ones  
Who have gone early to their gentle sleep,  
And never wept a tear nor sighed a sigh !  
Thrice-ravelled mazes ! The quick ebb and flow  
Of the wild tide within us, which we fain

Would stay, but cannot ; the vehement rise  
And fall of the fair fountain of the heart,  
That swells or sinks, we know not how or when ;  
The things that men call love and hate and fear,  
The agony or ecstasy of soul ;  
The hemlock or the palm, the thorn or rose ;  
The breaking bubbles of the cataract,  
In music or in thunder as they pour ;  
The silver smoothness of the summer stream,  
That sings itself to sleep beneath the willow ;  
The song, the sigh, the smile, the tear together ;  
The cradle and the grave set side by side !

‘ O life ! O mystery ! what means all this ?  
And how shall I interpret the caprice  
That seems to rule the ages, as if ill  
Had mastered good, and all things here below  
Had snapped the bonds of law and love and truth ?  
Life is not what it once was meant to be ;  
Failure and change make up our days and years,  
And man dreams daily on, still fond and weak,  
Mistaking disappointment for the cloud  
On which the rainbow smiles, and not the cloud  
From which the tempest issues, looking for  
The good time coming which has never come.  
Alas ! the glory here, like yonder sun,  
Is made for setting, lasting but a day :  
The wise have written vanity on all.

‘ Depths are on every side of us ; we walk  
Upon the narrow ledge of perilous life.  
That which we see is not the thing that is,  
Or only part of it ; and no man knows

The meaning of his own most simple prayers,  
Or comprehends their issues ; what he seeks  
Touches a thousand circles, far and near,  
Requiring force and agency and skill,  
Which only God can either loose or bind.

The thing we ask for we can tell ; the end  
Of that for which we ask is far beyond us.  
Sometimes before, sometimes behind us here  
Our shadows fall, as shines the sun on us.  
The shadowless is nowhere here on earth,  
Its sun is never high enough for that.

All motion tends to rest ; the universe  
Must stagnate soon with infinite collapse,  
Unless the hand that set its orbs a-rolling,  
With impulse ever fresh shall keep them so.

‘ The honours of the earth are fading fast ;  
Its garlands blanch in the fierce sun of time,  
And crowns grow dim with age ; the ancient thrones  
That represent the royalty of ages,  
And symbolize the coming monarchy,  
Unpropped by aught save the unloving steel  
Or more unloving gold, are giving way  
And rocking, as the earthquake moves along  
Beneath them ; sceptre after sceptre drops  
From palsied hands, that fain would grasp it still.  
This Europe, like a fleet of war-barques, swings  
Hither and thither on her straining cables,  
With all the shifting winds, and seems each day  
Just at the point of parting with her anchors  
And going down, like the great city, struck  
With angel-millstone, to arise no more.

‘ The deep affections of the heart dry up,  
Scorched by the lust of gold or power or pomp.  
Still youth believes in beauty, feeds on flowers,  
Drinks the dear sigh of one whose budding love  
Is sweeter than all sweetesses to him ;  
Then rushes into Mammon’s foul embrace,  
Wooing a world that gives no love for love.

‘ O wooed and won and lost, enchantress-world !  
Whose syren-song sends up the burning pulse  
To fever-heat, and bids all good things die !  
O wooed and won and lost ! And with thee lost  
All the bright gods and goddesses, which seemed  
To make this earth to me a heaven below.  
O wooed and won, fair world, but ever wooed  
And won in vain ; for whose false comeliness  
I left the wooing of a fairer world,  
That might by this time have been surely mine,  
And in the gain of which I might have found  
A heritage of beauty and of joy  
Beyond the richest tenancy of time.

‘ Ah ! the poor soarage of this mortal wing !  
We rise and fall ; we fall and rise again :  
Yet life is not all error, nor our past  
All weakness and all failure ; forasmuch  
As we are Heaven’s own offspring, there are thoughts  
Within us which betray their birth divine.

‘ Why seek I what is earthly ? It departs,  
And leaves me emptier. Why trust I man  
Rather than Thee, the undeceiving One ?  
Thou ever-faithful, he so seldom true ;  
Thou near and living, he far off and cold !

I cast aside the finite and the low ;  
Nought will suffice but that which is divine.  
Matter and sense are but the lowest round  
Of the high ladder, whose invisible top  
Rests on a throne, and lands me in a city  
Whose light is love, eternal and divine.

‘Tis said that out of death there cometh life,  
That ashes are the soil whence freshly spring  
The goodliest of the goodly trees of earth :  
The seed we sow lives not except it die.  
So did I see it when my idols perished,  
When life died down, and when the cistern broke  
Which for myself I had too fondly hewn.  
So did I find it when the nightingale,  
To which I had so fondly listened, died.  
So did I know it when the earthquake smote  
The brilliant shrine which hope and love had builded,  
To be at once my temple and my home.

‘Then I discovered the now empty tomb  
Of Him who, mightier than the grave, had gone  
Up from its silence to the throne of light ;  
And in that sepulchre I found the link  
(Long broken, and dissevered from its chain)  
Between me and the heaven from which this earth  
Had broken loose, like a rebellious star.  
The risen Victor there had fought my fight  
And won my palm ; out of the tomb He had  
Plucked immortality ; its emptiness  
But pledged to me the fulness of the life  
Which out of death His victory had brought.  
Another’s power had done the mighty work,

And given me all its trophies and its fruits ;  
Another's life had won for me the life  
Immortal, and my death had passed away.  
The love that seemed to fill that vacant cell  
Was more than morning to a soul like mine ;  
And in that desolate rock of Golgotha  
There lay the firm foundation-stone on which  
The new and fairer world is to be built,  
Awaiting but the time when He shall say  
To the cold ruins of this broken earth,  
" Arise from your pale ashes, and put on  
A beauty which ye never knew before."  
Then shall the chaos of six thousand years  
Depart, and the long day of order dawn.

‘ Old story tells,—it may be false, it may  
Be true, I know not which,—that in Thy day  
Of shame and agony upon the wood  
Of Calvary, Thy shadow, Son of God,  
Fell on the weeping robber at Thy side  
Upon the cross, and under that strange wing  
He refuge found from the oppressive heat ;  
And under it, to Paradise with Thee  
He went rejoicing. Even so on me  
Let that same shadow fall ; it has not lost  
Its sheltering power ; and so upon this earth  
Let it abide, that in the sultriness  
Of scorching noons it may refresh this waste,  
And bring back the lost blessing in its joy.

‘ Ours is a world of symbols, sky and earth  
Are ciphered o'er with type and imagery,  
Big with bright truth in every atom here ;

And nature (as we call it) is not that  
Which is, but that which shall be after this,—  
The outline of a universe where all  
The thoughts of God are ripened into fulness,  
Each segment rounded to a glorious whole.

‘ The flowers look truer and more lovable,  
More like their own sweet selves, at eve’s pale hour,  
Drenched in the dreamy light which twilight brings ;  
So earth is getting truer in the signs  
Above us and beneath us, as it ripens  
Into the grey of years ; to us remain  
The listening and the learning and the faith.

‘ I would not sow the wind nor reap the storm ;  
I would not plough the waste and barren deep ;  
I would not shoot my arrows at the clouds,  
Nor chase the thistle-down, nor count the sands :  
I would live truly, doing a true work  
In this my day of toil. I would not be  
The fool or butterfly, to live unloved  
And die in vain, unheeded and unmourned.  
I would distribute thoughts where’er I go,  
And scatter words that shall new-mould the world.  
I would not be of those whose cry is change,  
To whom all fixity is feebleness ;  
Whose mission is to uproot all rooted things,  
Unfasten anchors, slacken keystones, or  
Sponge out the lines of everlasting truth,  
Let loose uncertainty, and set the crown  
Of honour upon unbelief and doubt,  
Giving us doubly chaos back again.’

## BOOK IV.

---

' YOU say I went to dig for gold, and found  
But silver, or perhaps the viler clay.  
No ; I set forth a poor man, and returned  
A poorer, as men reckon poverty.  
But in that land of strangers I have found  
The wealth I had not thought of going for ;  
And I am rich in the eternal gold.'  
So runs the letter that lies open now.

' The mist had fallen upon the August moor ;  
Long miles of ruddy heath that spread around  
Had disappeared. The diamond arch of heaven  
Seemed all dissolved in vapour ; the bold hills  
Melted away ; the forest and the stream  
Became invisible ; only the sound  
Of the not distant waterfall, or wind  
Struggling among the trees, reminded me  
There was a world without, altho' I could  
No longer see it. Scarce an hour had passed,  
When the dull mist began to raise its wreaths,  
And the old world stood out again, all fair.

' So was it with me once, when, girt with mist,  
I knew no world but the few feet of earth  
On which I trod, and which ere long would be

My grave. But now the vapour has arisen,  
And the new world which has come out in beauty  
Has made me rich, for I am heir of all.

‘Men said to me, Your life is but an hour ;  
Go and enjoy it while you may ; ’tis poor  
And brief. They said to me, You are yourself  
A mist, a shadow ; go and dig for gold,  
And with that gold buy pleasure while you may.  
I went, and found not that which I had gone  
To seek. I went, and found what I had not  
Been seeking : mines of gold and rocks of gems,  
Tho’ not of earth, beyond the hills of time.  
That which had once appeared to me so full  
Was empty now ; and that which once seemed void  
Was full. The beautiful had come at last,  
And it was mine for ever. Men may say,  
We are but vapours, and our life a cloud ;  
We are but dreamers, and our life a dream :  
The deep dumb future, into whose abyss  
We drop when our last sigh is sighed, is nought  
But the dark dissolution of the mist  
Which had made up our poor existence here.  
Not such am I, however poor my life ;  
Not such, by Him who made me, was I meant  
To be. My being is no vapour-drift,  
That rises, spreads, and then evanishes  
In air. My future is not nothingness,  
Nor dead oblivion ; all my past yet liveth,  
And shall live evermore, refined from dross,  
And purged from the sad evil that has stained it.  
I cannot wholly part with the bright love,

The scenes of beauty, sights and sounds of joy,  
That made it what it was, a heritage  
Peculiarly my own, the mystic fount  
And parent of my vast eternity.

When I have reached the resting-place beyond  
(Cloudland and wonderland all wandered thro',  
Filled with the untrue and the true, the hues  
Of unsubstantial and substantial sunshine  
Still brightening or mellowing the long  
Dim vistas of my threescore years and ten),  
And stand upon the stable hills above,  
I shall look back upon my winding way,  
Upon the heights and depths of all my being,  
Seeking to gather from the wreck or drift  
Gems for eternity ; for all things here  
Have treasures hid in them which cannot perish,  
And which shall one day be restored to us.  
Be it our life is but a mist, a cloud,  
Or fragment of a cloud, yet still 'tis such  
As hides a never-setting star behind,  
Which will shine forth when all the cloud is gone.

‘O wondrous air above me and around !  
Thou upper sea, at whose deep bottom lies  
This buried earth with all thy shipwrecked stores !  
They speak of ocean paved with silent gems,  
Ages of treasure, gold and silver, dropt  
Into its depths by those who sail the seas,  
And over which the cold and covetous wave  
Rolls to and fro, hugging its guarded wealth.  
But when I think upon the myriad gems  
Of mild or mighty song that since the youth

Of Time have poured into thy deeper depths  
From lip or lyre, O all-containing air,  
With thy transparent girdle compassing  
This globe, I ask amazed, What has become  
Of the far more than pearls cast into thee,—  
The treasures of ten thousand melodies,  
Ruffling or soothing thy wide-wandering waves  
Hour after hour ? Say, whither have they gone ?  
Drift they like derelicts, or have they sunk  
For ever, or perhaps sweetly dissolved,  
Like Cleopatra's gem ? Say, is there not  
Some dauntless diver that can cunningly  
Descend into thy gloom and gather up  
That wealth of melody, more precious far  
Than pearls of Taprobanè, or the gold  
Dark hidden in the unsearched mines afar ?

‘Of all that real which is or is to be,  
Which makes this life of mine no cloud nor dream,  
I am not master ; it o’ermasters me.  
I mould it, and it mouldeth me ; I live  
In it, and in me does it also live ;  
It is a part of me, and I of it,  
And in the midst of that invisible force  
Which it contains, how helpless I ; but still  
It is not fate, ’tis living law and power  
Which compass me around and make my life  
Most free, and yet controlled by life as free  
Without me and above me every hour.  
What this strange being’s depths contain I know not ;  
Each day’s events and words dissolve in it  
Like music in the air, and pass away ;

And what of these may yet be gathered up  
Like squandered gold, we cannot here foretell :  
All true things of the past shall rise again.

‘ Men hate the definite belief, because  
It binds ; but binding is not bondage. See  
How free yon planets sweep and shine and wheel  
Hither and thither in their May-day dance !  
See how yon free winds sport, yon rivers flow,  
Each in its sphere the freest of the free !  
Yet law is on them, and their freedom springs  
From their acceptance of majestic law,  
Which binds to liberate ; for law is but  
The divine outcome of the true and perfect.  
Men scorn submission to another, yet  
Somewhere there must be mastership, a will  
Bearing on other wills, a helmsman steering  
The helpless sail thro’ the enslaving breeze,  
And giving freedom to the barque he steers ;  
All order else and progress cannot be.  
Obedience, said the ancient Greek, of blessing  
Is the great mother ; I must hourly watch  
My self-will, which like a rebellious demon  
Lurks deep within me, ready to spring forth,  
And break up order, ruining my peace ;  
Nor mine alone, but that of all around.  
Of pride-begotten strife, the history  
Of this disordered earth is sadly full.  
There is a virtue in obedience,  
Obedience pure and simple, like to that  
Which angels yield ; yet man repudiates  
The joy of meekness and the calm of order,

Too proud to be dependent, and forgetting  
That to obey is more than sacrifice.

‘ The pilot is the servant of the gale,  
And not the master. Nature’s passive power,  
Or active but unconscious energy,  
Defies the human will ; man must ally  
Himself with matter to subdue or mould it,  
And, yoking to his chariot-pole the strength  
Of fire, o’erpower the all-resisting force  
Which hems him in on every side, and makes  
Him feel the helplessness of will, as now,  
Like a maimed eagle, it attempts to soar,  
But cannot, for its hour is not yet come.  
Will yon bright sea-bird with the crescent wing  
Drop down upon the wave when I command it ?  
Its will obeys not mine, nor owneth yet  
A sway which one day will belong to man.  
Will yon slow cloud dissolve itself in sunshine,  
Or will that sunshine linger, when I bid it ?  
Will July come in haste because I call,  
Or will its dying roses bloom again  
Because I say, O roses, wither not ?  
Will midnight melt away and morn come up,  
Because I throw my window wide and say,  
O dayspring, dawn, and bring with thee the scent  
Of happy flowers, the song of happier birds ?  
Will these twin-stars, that faintly gleam above me  
As sisters’ faces, like and yet unlike,  
Draw near to me, that I may see and touch  
Their silver crests, because I bid them come ?  
Will death ungrasp his hard-locked treasure, when

I shout in his deaf ear and say, Restore  
My stolen gold, and give me back my gems ?  
Will the turf pity me, when one by one  
Recounting all my blanks, and pointing round  
To the thinned circle of my once full hearth,  
I plead to see the blue, blue eyes again,  
And drink the softness of the tender breath,  
Sweeter than sweetness, that breathed on me once,  
When lip met lip, in pure and soft delight,  
As morning rose or as the evening fell ?

‘ In a calm dream, one mellow August morn,  
Methought that suddenly I came upon  
An old and long-neglected garden, once  
Rich with the radiance of a thousand flowers,  
Now desolate and hoary ; all its walks  
And well-divided borders still the same ;  
Tall cypresses its girdle, and within,  
Each odorous shrub that flourishes apace  
In green old age, when the blithe-beaming flowers,  
Which with their delicate purple wooed the dew,  
Have all long since died down, and left behind  
This waste of withered leaves on which I walk,—  
This wilderness of melancholy fragrance.  
Here the blue lavender shoots up its stalk,  
And there the thyme its tiny blossoms spreads ;  
The aged box-tree and the sable yew,  
With branches lopped into a shady bower,  
In which there was the broken seat where once  
The children gathered when the noon was hot,  
And played or prattled or wove daisy-wreaths.  
The ivy, too, was clustering on the wall,

And the old nests were in its tangles still,  
Filled with sere leaflets, but the nestlings fled.  
Some fragments, too, of boyhood's broken toys  
Were strewed upon the unmown grass, or lay  
Upon the moss-grown walks, their owners gone.  
The scene was sadness, the remembrance sweet.  
I stood and gazed, and wished that by a word  
I could bring back the days and forms and faces  
Linked with the dreamy scene ! I would have said,  
"Come back, ye lost ones, and re-people this  
Your place of mirth and love, and let all be  
As it was then when I was one of you !"  
But what were words or wishes ? That fair past  
Lies far behind me ; and the power that might  
Take me to it or bring it back to me  
Is not in angel or in man. In fancy  
I can be there again, and light up all  
With recollections which bring only tears.  
But the bright joy, the laughter and the song,  
The busy feet, the lips of love, the eyes  
From which time's future was shut out, to which  
Life was one long glad present and no more,—  
I have no power to make them what they are not,  
No spell to bring the dreams of fancy true.

‘Life goes and comes not ; so I thought and said.  
Joy ebbs, but flows not ; how shall I secure  
The joy that never ebbs, the life that ne'er  
Departs, abiding like the constant sky  
Or everlasting hills ? I must be filled  
Out of a fountain which is always full ;  
So shall my life be life indeed, my joy

Be deep and tideless. Poor, I knit myself  
To the eternal treasure ; weak, I bind myself  
To the eternal strength ; imperfect, I  
Put on divine perfection ; steeped in evil,  
I clasp the eternal goodness ; sad and empty,  
I claim the fulness and the joy which from  
The heaven of heavens have visited this earth,  
That men might be as God, and earth as heaven.

‘ I seemed to see, on one hand and the other,  
The double infinite, far spread and dim,  
The two eternities of time and space,—  
So like each other, yet so diverse too ;  
So simple, and yet so inscrutable.  
I but a speck between them, yet as great,  
Nay, greater sure than both of them ; to me  
Their vastness does belong ; and I must know  
What all that vastness is to be to me,—  
Riches or want, the famine or the feast ?  
Is it to be a living on and on,  
As I do now, in weakness and in change,—  
Perpetual climbing of these splintered hills,  
And yet no summit reached, no resting-place,  
When time’s rough work is done, and the tall shadows  
Tell of the setting of life’s latest sun ?  
Perpetual drifting thro’ these sullen seas,  
Without an anchorage or haven in view ?  
The always seeking and the never finding ;  
The daily strife with evil and with pain ;  
The hope, the failure, and the broken heart ?  
‘ So did I muse, still groping wearily,  
Till through the mist the true sweet morning broke ;

Soft light from a new sun beyond these hills  
Stole down upon me, and the darkness fled.  
Beneath the wing of Him to whom alone  
These infinites belong with all their treasures,  
I found myself ;—and all these riches mine.

‘ For weakness is the heritage of man ;  
He is, and is not. Tho’ he fain would be  
King of an empire that he cannot rule,  
Lord of a heritage no part of which  
Will do him homage or obey his will.  
The outgrowth of his best-thought plans is not  
What he had purposed ; ’tis the indirect,  
The unpurposed issues of each change or motion  
That are the mightiest and the most enduring.  
The helm remonstrates with the pilot, thwarts  
The wisest steerage ; thus man’s master-strokes  
Are oft his follies,—in the dark he moves,  
Even when he seems the most to move in light.

‘ There once upon the earth was One by whom  
Great things were done : it seemed as if His hand  
Were framed to wield the sceptre of the world,  
And stay the anarchy which long had made  
This earth a waste. He bade the breeze be still,  
And it was calm ; he seized the robber Death  
When on his way to hide his spoil, where Nain  
Looks out on Esdraēlon’s plain, and up  
Old Nazareth’s brown hills, and with a word  
Compelled him to gave back the widow’s treasure ;  
He plucked the demon from the tortured soul  
Of him who wandered ’mid Gadara’s tombs ;  
He poured His light into the darkened eye,

And sounds, before unheard, into the ear ;  
He smoothed the writhing wave, and bade the storm  
Lie down in peace ; He touched the burning hand  
Of fever, and the blood once more ran cool ;  
He went in weakness to the Roman cross,  
And from the tree of blood where He was nailed  
Returned to Paradise, and took with Him  
The robber at His side ; into the home  
Of death He calmly entered, and came forth  
In triumph,—every foe beneath His feet.

‘ His will was all-constraining law ; His look,  
Like light, was silent power ; His words contained  
Divine omnipotence. But man’s poor will,  
Even at its strongest, what is it on earth ?  
What can his words effect ? Come, let me try.  
Silence, hoarse ocean ! Let me muse in peace,  
Unruffled by the stormy dissonance,  
The jar of battling billows round this rock ;  
Silence, dark ocean ! once again I say.  
It hears not, and my passionate words are vain ;  
My will, my power, my reason profit nought  
'Gainst that which has no reason, power, nor will.  
I cannot calm one wave, nor speak to rest  
One ripple yonder or one eddy here.  
I have no power o’er sea or slenderer air,  
Save when I set them one against the other ;  
Then I divide and conquer ; without that,  
I am as helpless as a new-born child.  
Yet I have soul, and these are soulless all :  
Dead nature mocks the living. “ Peace, be still ! ”  
From man is but a breath. That breeze which goes

We know not whither, and which came to us  
We know not whence, is stronger than the strong.  
Man speaks in vain. He is, and yet he is not  
Monarch of nature. There is still behind,  
Innate, invisible, and uncontrolled,  
A something mightier than a human will,  
A something farther down or higher up  
Than man or chance or nature's ancient forms.  
The laws of restoration or of ruin,  
Of living and of dying, are too simple,  
Yet too imperious and inexorable,  
Too self-executive and too resistless,  
To have come forth from earthly parliament ;  
Untainted with the feebleness of man,  
They each go out to do the work of God,  
And with authority to speak His will ;  
For deep within the being of those things  
Which we call laws there is contained a power,  
A living power, that shows all Godhead near.

‘Who spiked the royal Andes, buckled on  
Their brigandines of snow ? Who called the stream  
From under the deep glacier, bade it flash  
From the lone rock-clift to the thirsty plain ?  
Who tinted sky and sea with the one blue  
That maketh both so passing beautiful,—  
The upper hyaline,—of the two fair  
The fairer and the calmer,—far beyond  
The reach of storm to ruffle or to stain ;  
The lower hyaline so vast, yet oft  
Troubled and broken by the unbridled gale ?  
Who lavishes the gold of daily noon,

Or showers the silver rain of brilliant night ?  
Who bids the tides with soft and measured tread  
Keep step to the mild music of the moon ?  
Who lays the earth down to her winter sleep,  
And wakes her up again when April comes ?  
Who leads the sea-bird o'er the autumn main,  
And brings it back when summer warms the wave ?  
Instinct with life, beyond what man has dreamed,  
Each statute does its office, sure and true,  
As if an angel dwelt in it unseen.  
There is no feebleness nor failure in it,  
And ages cannot make it obsolete.  
It was, it is, it shall be, until He  
Who made it law and filled it with His life  
Shall cancel it, or with a higher law  
Supplant it in the wisdom of His will.

‘ The laws of this old universe of ours  
I cannot make or unmake ; each of them  
Is far beyond me in its energy  
For good or ill ; and if I cannot say  
To death, Give up thy prey, nor to the grave,  
Restore thy captive dust ; to winter, Go,  
And let sweet spring return ; to the east wind, Leave,  
And let the bland south breathe with healing balm ;  
To the May-rose, Bloom round the golden year ;  
To the warm leaf, Heed not October’s frost ;  
To this depressive heartache, Pain me not ;  
To the old smile, Come back to faded lips ;  
To love’s lost lustre, Re-illumne the eye  
That death has dimmed : if I am impotent  
Amid this network vast of living law,

I must strike friendship with it, that the love,  
The wisdom, and the power which dwell in it  
May side with me and bear me nobly through.  
All law must be upon my side, or else  
I must do battle with the universe,  
With every atom of it for my foe.  
Law is the utterance of potent will,  
Holy and wise and loving. With this will,  
This royal will, my will must be at one,  
Or else I sink, without a hope of rising,  
My being all undone, and I a waif  
Or wandering leaf on some deserted shore,  
Tossed from the sand to the cold wave, and from  
The wave to the unsympathizing sand.

‘O sound and shape and colour! what were earth  
Without your harmonies? All life and love  
Are in you, and without you all is chaos.  
In you I see what law is, and how law  
Pervades all being, sweetly permeates  
All creaturehood, the lifeless and the living.  
Yon ocean, as it smooths itself to rest  
When suns are sinking o'er its golden brow,  
Or as it gathers round it its green waves,  
Like a rich mantle studded o'er with pearls,  
When storms are rising, bends in matchless curves,  
And brightens in each colour of the bow.  
The air, the solid earth, the delicate sunbeam  
Contain your riches, and each day unfold them.  
Hue, beauty, melody, thus deeply stored,  
Come forth in wide profusion without end,  
Some bidden, some unbid, by human skill.

‘The law that does or undoes is beyond  
The present sovereignty of creaturehood.  
Hereafter human will shall be a power,  
Like His who made it what it is ; and then  
Each mute volition of the will may be  
Of all earth’s finite potencies the most  
Potent and swift. But now the will is nought ;  
Powerless as childhood ; nature owns it not ;  
Dead matter mocks its bidding ; death and life  
Alike refuse it love or reverence.

‘I would go out beyond this narrow cage  
Of individual being, and look round  
Upon the many-peopled world of men,  
For self is narrow and the world is broad ;  
Small is the drop, the ocean infinite :  
Part of that marvellous human sea am I,  
A drop, a wave, a fragment of its foam.  
To me all men belong, and I to all.  
This earth is every man’s ; this earth is mine :  
Its many-storied nations, far and near ;  
Its subtleties of mind and will and heart ;  
Its thoughts and dreams and fantasies, the true  
Or false ; its tides, its tempests, and its calms ;  
The living multitudes that move across  
Its plains, or crowd its ever-seething cities,—  
Offspring and workmanship of one great Father,  
Vessels of noble measure, clay or gold,  
Made to contain all sorrow or all joy,  
And filled alternately with either, as  
The bitter or the sweet of time distils  
From the events of each day’s changing hours.

Each life a treasure-house of hopes and fears,  
A garden crowded o'er with weeds and flowers,  
A chamber with dissolving views all round,  
A great existence, whose capacities  
Are beyond measure and conception vast,  
Each in itself an immortality.

‘I would shut out this little life of mine,  
Or see it as a leaf on Time’s one tree,  
A portion of the awful universe.

I am but one of myriads, who have all  
A life to live under the common sky,  
As pregnant with a hidden destiny,  
As great and full of meaning as my own.

‘Upon this turf I would sit down, and feel  
The silent benedictions of the clouds  
Descending softly on our summer tilth.

The breath of the bright wind goes by in balm,  
Fondling the forest-leaves, and from the pines  
Bringing mysterious odours never stale ;  
The light mists flit thro’ the fair sky like dreams,  
And every bird is at its height of song.

I would go far apart from cities, where  
Life with its thousand-tissued nerves and sinews  
Works at high pressure, self its spring and aim.  
Too steep the gradients of this headlong age,  
Too sharp its curves for safety or for strength,  
Too swift the motion, and too reckless of  
Or law or life : so said I to myself,  
As, looking down upon the smoke and fire  
Of forges clouding the clear sky with gloom,  
I heard the sigh and saw the sweat of toil.

‘Here, beyond sound of the tumultuous street,  
That knows no rest, I muse upon the wrongs,  
The sadnesses, and sins that shade the earth,  
And make us weary of its history ;  
In spirit pondering how love and law,  
The double keystone of the world’s strong arch,  
Fast crumbling down, may be upreared again ;  
Asking what means the age, its words and deeds,  
And whither it is drifting, or what is  
Its one prevailing spirit ? Is it not  
To unitize, but not to unify ?  
To force discordances together, leaving out  
Their most essential parts or truths, and then  
To call it universal harmony ?  
To give self-will its widest, largest scope ?  
To level earth’s old inequalities  
Of matter and of men, and roll them out  
Into a plain, monotonous and vast,  
According to its thoughts of rank and right ?  
Destructive not constructive in its aims,  
It breaks the great humanity in pieces  
Which God created a cohesive whole,  
But re-cementeth not its shattered parts ;  
It makes each man yet more and more a unit,  
A separate atom of mortality,  
Knit to no fellow, and existing only  
For self, and for some narrow circle round him,  
A solitary sand-grain, wearing down  
To less and less as the sharp sea-wind stirs it.

‘This is the day of overthrow : I see  
The nations ground to pieces, and the crowns

All melted down, the purple torn to shreds.  
The chrysm of ancient royalty is drained,  
Each fragrant drop exhausted, not to be  
Replenished till the great anointing comes  
Of the new dynasty, which all the earth,  
Weary with endless change, shall gladly own.  
The tempest has gone out, and the fixed earth  
Rocks to its centre. The uplifted axe  
Is brandished everywhere, and does its work.  
The sword has left its scabbard, and will not  
Return to it until its blade is dim.  
Strike, thou blind sword,—strike quick, and do thy  
work ;

Level alike the evil and the good,—  
The day of the upbuilding draweth nigh.  
Earth has been long unjudged, He comes to judge ;  
Earth has been long misruled, He comes to rule.

‘Error and truth are now at last alive,  
Both putting on their armour and their strength.  
Their day of dormancy is past ; they raise  
Themselves to their full height, and face to face  
Equip themselves for battle and for work.  
But of that work and battle who can tell  
The issues ?—who forecast the fears and hopes,  
The weariness, the wounds, the broken hearts,  
The passion, and the folly, and the sin,  
That shall fill up our human history,  
As field on field is fought, and lost, and won,  
As ruin spreads itself abroad o’er earth ?  
For living truth and living error oft  
Work (as they go upon their earnest way

All thro' the ages) similar effects  
Of demolition and commotion dire.

‘Asleep, the warrior wins no victory,  
But is led captive in ignoble chains ;  
The drowsy sentinel betrays the fort :  
So sleeping truth (and often has it slept)  
Invites defeat and wins the coward’s shame.  
Asleep, the serpent is innocuous  
As the young lamb ; awake, it wounds and slays :  
So sleeping error seems to unskilled eyes  
Harmless, nay, beautiful, no thing of fear ;  
Like the coiled basilisk, it spreadeth out  
Its glowing links, alluring all who gaze,—  
Then wakes, and with its mortal poison stings.

‘The battle of two wills is useless strife,  
Ambitious wrestling for the mastery,  
Whose course is havoc, and whose end is hate.  
The battle of two minds is noble war,  
Whose end is truth, whose trophies peace and love.

‘Day fights with night, and night contends with  
day ;  
Each is alternate victor ; each has won,  
And each has lost. No trophy crowns the brow  
Of the victorious host. So would I not  
That such, my friend, should be thy life-long war ;  
Half shame, half glory. ’Tis to him that conquers  
The crown belongs ; fight on and slack not ;  
The strife is sore, but the reward is bright.  
Wreathe not thy sword with roses ; let the edge  
Be bare and penetrating ; double up  
The well-strung bow, and let the shaft go free,

Like the white lightning from the ragged cloud,  
Pregnant with fire. Strike home, and hew thy way  
Thro' the thick hosts of evil ; or be what  
The old Greek called the warrior, the spear-anvil,  
Calm mid the raining dart-shower ; so shalt thou  
Do thy one work, which thou alone canst do,—  
Win the one battle thou alone canst win.

‘ Men quarrel, and then seek to justify  
Their variance, and each taunts the other with  
“ ‘Twas you began it all ; ” the weaker side,  
However just and honest, must go down :  
The pitcher strikes the stone, the stone the pitcher,  
It boots not which, the pitcher goes to pieces.  
Might knows not right, and seldom have the many  
Been generous to the few. When did the wolf  
Pity the lamb, or when the kestrel stretch  
Its wings above the dove save to devour ?  
“ Woe to the vanquished ” is the history  
Of human warfare here ; revenge and power  
Are not for man. With neither can he be  
Entrusted for a day ; and least with power.  
Stronger than love of fame or love of woman  
Is love of power,—power o'er our fellow-men ;  
And power intoxicates, but most of all  
Power spiritual, rule over souls, by what  
Soft name we please to call it. The ideal  
Authority, like that of God, the power  
To bless, still more the power to curse,  
Whether thro' priestly touch, or magic rite,  
Or awful voice, how coveted by man !  
This double spur, how it has pricked ambition

On and still on, remorselessly beneath  
Its iron hoof all truth and charity  
To trample down, crushing the noble will,  
The tender conscience, and the loving heart.  
Woe to the weak, has been the battle-cry.

‘The mystic cup of power inebriates ;  
And he who lacks it rests not till he finds it,  
He who has got it thirsts for more and more.  
Woe to the man who throws himself between  
Ambition and its object ; sword and fire  
(If sword and fire be weapons of the age ;  
If not, some sure and palpable revenge)  
Shall strike him down and see him vilely laid,  
Broken in reputation and in heart,  
A victim to the hungry lust of power.

‘But shall I thus forecast the day of evil,  
When every lip beside me whispers peace,  
When every lyre is strung to notes of triumph,  
And all the prophets of the earth foreseeing  
The coming progress ? When the heavens are clear,  
And the bright planet of humanity  
Is in the ascendant, shall I dare to speak  
Of lurking thunder ? Yet can I forget  
That the long calm is parent of the storm ?  
In the clear sky the thunderbolt is forged,  
And thro’ the silent air on silent wing  
The eagle swoops to seize his far-seen prey :  
So bursts the last dread hurricane upon  
The sons of men, when all is mirth and song.  
The wildest, widest storm these eyes have seen  
Was once at dawn, after a tranquil night,

When not a whisper broke the breathless air,  
To speak of peril or betray the foe.  
Ocean was still in its serenest sleep,  
The slow wave's sigh swept round the curving strand,  
When, as from ambush, sprang the ragged cloud,  
Startling the sea-bird with its sudden gloom.  
The lightning, like a sword of sinuous fire,  
Leaped from its scabbard, scourging earth and sea,  
Seaming the cliff, sinking the helpless barque,  
Filling the vacant sky with lurid light,  
Till the broad billows glowed, one scroll of flame.  
The red gale rode the ocean, rushed across  
The writhing foam, breasting the fretful surf,  
Flushed with the splendour of the tremulous bolt,  
That went and came, like living minister  
Of pent-up anger, from the solemn heavens.  
The thunder, shouting from the stedfast rocks,  
And sweeping round the concave of the hills  
Whose sleep it had awakened, shook the shore.  
In one quick moment every object changed ;  
Chaos and darkness seemed to come again,  
Deep calling unto deep with sullen throat,  
Like minute-guns at Nature's funeral.

‘ So breaks the last tornado over man,  
Disturbing his gay dream of human progress,  
And levelling the tower he would have built  
To scale the heavens and seat humanity  
Upon the throne of God. So, when he thinks not,  
The desolation cometh, and the hope  
Sinks like the sand-built shieling in an hour.

‘ All that high science, soaring to the sun,

Or searching the profundities beneath,—  
All that philosophy, with thoughtful lip,  
Has spoken to the eager sons of men,—  
All that bright poesy, adorning fact  
Or summoning fiction to her aid, can do,  
To heal earth's sickness or to soothe her fret,—  
All that fond pleasure, in her gayest mood,  
Has forged to fascinate or cheer the soul,—  
All has been tried, but ever tried in vain.  
These are but anodynes, whose opiate-draught  
Lulls for a moment the deep-seated pain ;  
They bring no restoration of the health,  
No styptics for the world's still bleeding wounds.

‘O good Samaritan, draw near at length  
(Levite and priest have passed in coldness by),  
Come with thy oil and wine to heal and cheer !  
Humanity lies sick, all pierced with wounds,  
Bleeding to death upon the rugged road  
Of this strange life, and thou alone canst cure.’

The day leans down, and the light lessens fast,  
The mountains into shadows melt away ;  
Twilight is creeping softly o'er the shore  
And winding round the rocks. We anchor here ;  
For the great currents of the world sweep by,  
Too strong for us without an anchorage  
That will hold out against both tide and wind.  
Ofttimes, I know, beneath a ruffled surface  
Sleeps the deep under-calm ; but here, beneath  
A tranquil face, I dread the under-storm.

Time's depths are now behind us, and our skiff

Has touched the shallows ; we let down the lead,  
And find the fathoms few ; these breakers mark  
The lessening depths ; a few more strokes, and then  
We shall be resting on the safe, safe shore,—  
The peaceful seaboard, where no beacon-light  
Is needed to protect the midnight barque  
From perilous cliffs ; and where (thrice happy they ! )  
So many of the loving and the loved  
Have landed long ago, enskied and safe  
Beyond mortality's corroding touch  
Or death's unsparing sting ; rejoicing now  
O'er sorrows past and glory yet to come,  
And in the new and never-ending song  
Praising the love that steered them thro' the storm,—  
The love which, sweeping from their sky the clouds,  
Showed them afar the signal-star of dawn.

Swiftly we steal along our orbit here,  
Moving, and yet unconscious of the motion.  
Earth rushes on in awful haste thro' space,  
And yet no sound is heard, no quivering feet ;  
No snowflake drops from off the mountain-pine,  
No dewdrop trembles on the slender spray.  
Swiftness is silence, planet-speed is dumb ;  
Or if it utter sound to us, it is  
The melody of motion ; not a jar  
Or broken note in its perennial song.

So shall it be in the great age to come,  
When the eternal orbit, not of earth,  
But of all being, shall be entered on  
With a fresh impulse from the hand that gave  
Its motion to the universe at first,

As from the throne projected into space,  
All weighed and measured in the unerring scale,  
Each star and planet took its separate way,  
Timed for the wondrous journey, which with all  
Dumb nature's swift obedience they fulfil  
In the calm willingness of happy service,  
Which knoweth neither murmur nor mistake.

Content to do our work and battle on  
In midst of disappointment, making head  
Against the merciless hosts of evil, sure  
Of victory nowhere now, yet ever sure  
Of victory at last, tho' knowing not  
Or how or when that triumph is to come ;  
Armed only with the weapons forged upon  
No earthly anvil, by no mortal hands,  
And clad in armour which no spear can pierce ;  
True to our Captain and our colours, here  
We fight the battle till our day is done,  
And the glad trumpet bids us quit the strife,  
One against many, weary, yet full of hope.

The evening brings all home. For that we wait,  
Which is at once our evening and our morn,  
The end of evil and the dawn of good.  
October sheds the leaf and April brings it ;  
So one flower fadeth and another springs ;  
Earth renovates itself. When we are gone,  
Our homes will not be vacant ; and the crowds  
Will swell our cities as when we were there.  
Earth liveth on and on amid this change,  
Or with us or without us to the end.

That end, ah, would that it were come ! All things

Press forward to it, and cry out, Delay not ;  
For hope deferred has sickened the sad heart,  
And men are asking, Shall it ever come ?

Shake down your leaves, O many-tinted trees  
Of dying autumn ; let the forest gale  
Of the unsparing north search through and through  
Your desolate boughs, and heap the earth with sackcloth.  
Another winter soon will lie behind us,—  
One winter less to come ere the long spring  
Shall o'er us shed its beauty and its balm !  
Fling down your stars, O skies ! O waiting earth !  
Heave with thy final earthquake ; and, O sea !  
Let loose thy last stern tempest for the day  
Of nature's shock, above us and beneath ;  
Speed on Creation's travail-throes, from which  
There comes at last the perfect and the fair.

## BOOK V.

---

‘ You crave me for some record of my thoughts ;  
You give me yours, and ask for mine again,—  
Some transcript of my musings, day by day,  
While seated by my never-lonely hearth  
In these sharp weeks, when keen December’s cold  
Chains the free stream and whitens field and hill,  
Covering old earth’s dead face as with a veil  
Of frozen moonlight, hiding its shut eyes,  
And shrouding features now no longer fair.’

So writes the hand of old companionship,  
And so I read the page that now folds out,—  
The thoughtful page of a most classic pen,  
Which in a bolder hand would soon have led  
Its owner into fields of world-wide fame.

‘ Men and their words, as memory may serve,  
Strewed over years long past, I would recall ;  
They with myself, their thoughts with mine half-  
mingled,—

Life interwoven with life and thought with thought,  
Like boughs of the thick forest. One I knew,  
A worshipper of shadows from his youth,  
Who walked with me life’s path for many a year.  
He loved the clouds because they were unreal ;

He followed most the paths which led to nothing,  
And which, but for their own quaint windings, were  
Devoid of beauty like a moorland track.

He looked into the mists for rainbow-hues  
That seemed to be, but were not ; down the depths  
For pearls that diver's hand could never grasp.

Between to-day's pursuit of all bright things,  
And cold to-morrow's disappointed hopes,  
His life went by ; yet other life than this  
To wish he seemed not. Upon air he fed,  
And things which grew of air ; he flung away  
His twoscore years of prime, and left behind  
Only a beacon, not a monument.

Gifts, fortune, friends, he had upon his side ;  
But what were willing winds and waves to one  
Who had no chart to steer by, and no haven ?  
What was the soul, however large, to one  
Who never looked beyond the suns of time  
Save in sad mockery, to dream and speak  
Of the unknown and the unknowable ;  
Whose fancy was his only oracle ;  
Who could buy land and pleasure at his will,  
Yet slighted that which silver could not win,—  
The true imperishable gladnesses  
Strewn in our daily paths by heavenly hands,  
Free as the general air or common sun ?

‘ He dreamed and doubted ; flung belief away,  
Then took it to his bosom ; mused and wondered,  
Thinking that what had been might be again,  
Might be for ever. “ Who can tell ? ” he said.  
“ Pluck the bright day while yet the sunshine lasts,

And call it thine. Belief or unbelief,  
What are they? Only the unreal words  
Of spirits groping in the mist for what  
They know not. Is not faith a sick man's dream?  
And is not truth a thing of age or clime?  
And is not joy the transitory gleam  
Of some aberrant meteor on its way  
To nothingness? And is not all of that  
Which man calls life a vision of the night?  
And what is death? The exhalation merely  
Of midnight mist, or fragment of a cloud,  
On which some moonshine rested for an hour."

‘So reasoned he, so doubted, and so died.  
His life was wasted, and he sowed no seed  
Which might spring after him; the world was not  
His debtor while he lived, nor when he died.  
His is a grave without a monument,  
And no one has been glad that he was born.  
The winds were ever on his side, and yet  
He moved not on, but lay like one becalmed,  
Or strayed in eddies, narrower or more wide,  
As the capricious impulse urged him on.  
There was a needy world around him, yet  
Its famished spirit was not fed by him.  
Sorrow and evil dwelt hard by, and yet  
No ray from him e'er lighted up a soul,  
Or made the world less dark than it had been.  
“ My early rising will not raise the sun  
One hour the sooner,” he was wont to say  
As he lay down upon his bed of ease;  
And yet, in the sad consciousness of life

Thus gone to waste, he would speak out at times ;  
“ The fool resolves not till the battle’s lost ;  
It is too late to don the helmet when  
The head is struck and death is in the blow.  
Fools at the end, the wise at the beginning,  
Know what is to be done ; the wise proceed  
Straightway to do it, in the face of storm  
Or enemies or weariness of spirit,  
Heedless of failure upon failure, still  
Bent on success and resolute to win.  
Fight your own battle ; lean on none but God ;  
Beware of allies in a warfare such  
As that to which thou hast been born, and which,  
Or well or ill, must be fought out alone.  
No sin (so says the proverb of the East)  
That is persisted in is small ; no sin  
Laid at God’s feet remaineth great or dark.  
Tempt not the tempter ; he is near enough  
Already ; bid him go upon his way,  
And leave thee to pursue thy work in peace.  
Be wise in time, lest on your tomb be carved,  
As upon mine, the words that warn,—TOO LATE.”

Thus writes another, chronicling the past :  
‘ Your old friend the Beginner, as you called him,  
He promised fair ; none fairer ; he has gone,  
And left no mark. Capricious and unstable,  
He finished nothing, and his life was filled  
With poor abortions,—torsos,—hardly that ;  
As if upon each marble block that lay  
Around, he had his chisel tried in vain.

'Twas not mere fame he lost ; that was not much :  
He left the world no richer than he found it,  
And passed away unmissed,—none to record  
His birth with joy, or, visiting his tomb,  
In love to say, What owe I not to him !

' He left the harbour to go down at sea,  
The dull wave closing over him unwept.  
He started on the race, but dropt aside,  
Losing both goal and prize. He drew the bow  
Strongly and well ; the arrow missed the white ;  
In fickle haste he flung away the bow,  
And emptied the full quiver on the ground.  
Brilliant and sparkling, but unstable, like  
A fountain playing in the sunshine, swayed  
Hither and thither by the chafing wind,  
Then sinking suddenly to nothingness,  
He promised brightness, but it died in gloom.  
His life was lived in vain ; at every point  
Unfinished and abortive, broken off  
Just when it might have told ; begun in earnest,  
It quickly cooled, as if the fire within  
Had burned itself away before the time.

' Yet find I, written in some wakeful hour,  
When the full sense of what he might have been  
And might have done burst in upon his soul,  
Thoughts such as these, not worthy to be lost :  
" All things, both good and evil, have their cycles—  
The sickness and the health, the calm, the storm,  
The labour and the rest ; they come and go  
In tides, alternating their flow and ebb ;  
Not like the river, always on and on.

Let not to-morrow swallow up to-day.  
Too late to-night the skilled physician comes,  
To call back life that left at early morn.  
To-morrow's calm restoreth not the wreck  
Of yesterday; nor roots itself again  
The uprooted pine. Then on, however dark;  
The undoing is beyond us, and the loss  
Is loss for ever; therefore quarrel not  
With the dead past, which no device of thine  
Can bring to life again, but fling thyself  
Upon the future, and make it thine own;  
Seize for thyself its unwrought mines of gold;  
Let not the past be father of the future,  
But live as thou hast never lived before;  
So shall thy poverty be turned to wealth.  
The night brings back the stars; the wintry frost  
Freshens the blood; the keen gale of the north,  
Tho' blowing over miles of desolate moor,  
Makes the pale cheek to bloom, and bloom again,  
When softer breezes left it only wan.  
Stumble and fall not, you will mend your pace;  
Stumble and fall, you must at once arise,  
Or else be trodden down by those behind.  
Make sure of every footstep, yet remain not  
Upon the ladder's lowest round, but rise,  
Rise daily; it will take a lifetime's years  
To reach the top. Like huntsman of the rocks,  
Pursue thy prey, and know what thou pursuest.  
Oft, when we think that we have seized the quarry,  
'Tis we ourselves are caught. Grasp not too much,  
Lest thou lose all. Think not your safety lies

In many roads ; one pathway will suffice  
Better than thousands, if so be it lead  
To the one city whither thou wouldest go.  
'Tis by a single, sometimes slender thread,  
That we unwind the skein ; the many threads  
Do but entangle, and make effort vain.  
Who strikes the naked anvil but a fool ?  
Bring out the glowing iron, lay it there,  
Then strike and spare not ; so thy skilful arm  
Shall not bring down the steady stroke in vain.  
Think ere thou openest thy lips, and know  
Whither thou goest ere thou tak'st thy staff.  
Life is no venture, and that soul of thine  
Was not created to be flung away,  
Or spilled like water on the absorbing sand.  
Make much of May ; husband thy summer hours,  
And lay up sunshine for the day of frost.  
Winter is coming, and it may be sharp ;  
Its icy touch will freeze thy fervent veins."

'Thus wrote he down at times his thoughts, like one  
In quest of goodness, groping for the day.  
He saw the light, and yet he walked not in it ;  
He saw the darkness, yet he shunned it not :  
The currents of the world rushed by, and swept him  
From every anchorage far out to sea.

'Another college-friend you may remember,  
In threadbare raiment (for with shirt of ice  
Cold poverty had girt him), but with mien  
Modest, yet dauntless as the winter oak  
That breasts the gale upon the battered cliff.

His lean face told us that his fare was scanty ;  
His big cloak hid the poverty beneath ;  
His dwelling he preferred to be unknown,  
Save to the few who loved him for his worth,  
And whom he trusted for their worth again.  
His books were old and torn, save when a friend  
Had lovingly but secretly supplied  
His need. November's rain fell hardly on him,  
And the keen March-breeze struck him to the bone.  
His midnight lamp was ill supplied with oil,  
And even that stinted store was dearly bought  
With scantier meals. His winter hearth was cold,  
The sharp wind searched his attic thro' and thro',  
And the snow sifted thro' the broken panes  
Of his ill-lighted chamber. When the days  
Grew warm with summer's love and summer's smile,  
He sought the sunshine of the southern glen,  
That won him with its silence and its joy ;  
Or the soft shade of the fresh-budding fir  
Upon the ruddy moorland, where the lark  
Sung its delicious song to the clear noon.  
For he loved summer with a passionate heart,—  
Wept when it ended, joyed when it began,  
And sighed when sweet June's longest evening told  
That the dear brightness had begun to wane.  
He revelled in its brilliance ; it was his,  
Poor tho' he was, and he could have it all,  
Yet no one be the poorer for his wealth.  
His mind was lofty, and his soul was large ;  
In person comely, and in manners far  
Above his birth. Refined in tone and thought

By nature and by study, he won hearts  
And found companionships. The honour came  
He did not seek ; but more, the wisdom came  
That he had sought so fondly and so well,—  
Wisdom, the fruit of self-denying years  
And studious toil, whose ripe abundance filled  
His eager spirit ; and with it there came  
Eternal wisdom, such as He alone  
Can give who giveth unupbraidingly  
And with a generous hand to all who ask,  
Filling the soul's wide vessel to the full,  
And mellowing while gladdening all the life.

‘Lifted from poverty, he sought not wealth,  
But took the little he had won, and went  
To live a useful, uneventful life,  
Out from the world's great city-heat, and from  
The sweep of her fierce tempests, which strike down  
The sons of earth's ambition, who seek fame,  
And power, and eminence, at cost of all  
The calmnesses and charities of life.

‘And one went with him to his sweet retreat,  
Whom he had loved and sought, but loved and sought  
For years in vain. Her friends in pride had said  
That she should wed herself to nobler blood,  
And she had yielded to their pride ; yet still  
Her soul was his, even when she stood aloof.  
And she was worthy of his lofty spirit ;  
Nor could she hide from him the secret joy  
His presence gave, even when her words were cold.  
He won her at the last, with all her worth,  
And he forgave her these slow years of pain,

In which she loved as tho' she loved him not,—  
Forgave her for her beauty and her love.

‘The freckled sky bent mildly over them,  
The sun went softly thro’ the snowy clouds,  
The scent of many a rose was in the air,  
The west wind wooed the clover in its bloom,  
And, like a lover’s breath upon the cheek,  
Made each rich blossom quiver with delight,  
Wandering unbidden o’er the glowing heath,  
On that fair noon when before man and God  
They vowed the holy vow that made them one.

‘Twas a chill, livid eve when they returned  
And crossed the threshold of their future home.  
The sky looked wan and weary, and the gale,  
In haste to strip the forest, swept along  
O’er the desponding earth ; and as it went,  
Smote the slow pulses of the shivering sea,  
And roused them to the tempest’s fever-heat.  
For miles along the level sand, the surf  
Rose like a silver ledge to fringe the gloom ;  
While farther out the breakers foamed and fell,  
Their long grey tresses loosened in the breeze,  
Deep calling unto deep in tumult wild.  
The near seemed cheerless, and the far had lost  
The clear, calm outline which to distance gives  
Its sweet and finished loveliness ; the clouds  
Seemed mountains, and the mountains seemed like  
clouds,  
So mingled and confused was earth with heaven.  
“‘Is this a shadow,” said they to each other,  
“Even now begun to fall upon our lot ?

Or shall we set the noon against the night,  
And take the presage from the former ? Or,  
Yet better, shall we fling all omens off,  
And look above the darkness and the light  
To Him, the Guider of our course, with whom  
Dwelleth no night, and into whose fair heaven  
Clouds cannot come, nor tempest, nor the bolt  
Of the capricious lightning, nor the chills  
Of winter, nor the tainted breath of sickness,  
Nor the hot tear, nor sigh of broken heart,  
Nor sin, the bitter fountain-head of all  
The ills that wander o'er this helpless earth ?

“ Then on we move ; thro’ darkness or thro’ light,  
Thro’ the thorn-thicket or the garden-walk,  
O’er the rough mountain or the easy plain,  
All will be well. The tent is not the palace,  
The desert is not Eden ; but the love  
Which fills yon heaven is ours for evermore,  
Shorter or longer let our journey be,  
O’er every scene the blessed cross sheds day,  
And love is leaning o’er us from the height  
Of the invisible heavens, still bidding us  
Look up and love, look up and taste the joy.  
Day unto day is uttering happy speech,  
Night unto night revealeth wisdom there.  
The cross where He, the Light of light, once hung,  
In conflict with the Prince of Darkness, shines  
In heavenly gladness, piercing every shade ;  
From it distilleth health, and up from it  
There wells the water of immortal life.  
Ours be the faith which turns all ill to good !

Ours the quick ear that can take in far music,  
And learn both song and tune! Ours the keen eyes  
That can see angels where no others can!  
Then on we move, to face each coming storm;  
Brief is the day of tempests, brief the age  
Of ill, the end of which is endless calm.  
Shall He, beneath whose everlasting wing  
We have sought shelter, e'er forget us? Yes;  
When the neglectful sea forgets its tides,  
Or skies grow weary of their glorious stars,  
Or the sun trips in mid-air,—rushes off  
Into the distance of oblivious space,—  
Then we may be forgotten; nay, not then,  
Not even then;—let all the universe  
Break loose or crumble into ancient dust,  
There still remains the constant love of God.  
No flux of tide in that eternal love;  
Always the same, a calm, unchanging sea,  
Which never knew a shipwreck nor a storm."

‘ Two tranquil years they lived, and then she  
passed

To be with Him whom, seeing not, she loved;  
Leaving behind her here a happy child,  
Fair as her mother, and as full of love;  
Who, as her womanhood came on, found one  
Whose heart was hers, to whom she gave herself;  
And for a season sunshine seemed to come  
Back to her father’s dwelling and her own.  
That season was not long; the cloud returned,  
And brought with it a double grief and gloom:  
Her heart’s beloved perished in the deep;

She pined, and followed him ; one child she left,  
Sole prop and solace of the aged sire.

‘ Him found I in his solitude,—the friend  
Whose worth and learning we had ofttimes proved  
In other days, when both were in our prime.  
He told me all, speaking with that deep calm  
Which lengthened sorrow brings, and with that  
tone

Of solemn cheerfulness oft given to men  
Whose days are closing, and who know that soon  
They shall rejoin the lost, o’ertaking those  
Who had outstripped them in the race of time.

“ Here she was born,” he said, “ my child of hope,  
And here I saw her die, on the same couch  
Where she who bare her died, long years before.  
This is her child, a mother’s orphan love,  
All boyhood’s brightness nestling in his cheek.  
He calls me father, for his own he knew not,  
Save by his picture yonder, and his tomb  
In that green hollow, where the name,—no more,—  
Is cleanly carved on the enduring stone.

Mother and father, sister, brother, all  
Am I to him, my thrice-beloved boy :  
Dear for thyself art thou, thy joyous self,  
Staff of my right hand, upon which my age  
Leaneth so fondly in my wanderings here ;  
Dear, too, for her that bare thee ; all her face  
Mirrored in thine, and all her voice in thine  
Echoed so truly ;—O my summer-rose,  
Which the cold night-blast struck down from the stem,  
Thou art not here to shed thy fragrance round !

*Thou, the bright May-bud,—this, the glistening dew-drop*

*Which thou didst clasp within thy opening folds.*

“You see her tomb,—her own, her husband’s grave,  
In the low nook which for herself she chose,  
Hard by the happy streamlet, and as far  
As might be from the melancholy sound  
Of the cold sea, beneath whose fatal surge  
He whom she loved, and on whose arm she leaned  
A few fair years, went down, when with brave arm  
He fought the foaming breaker, as it swept  
On to the sinking shell of the strong barque,  
Which the fierce north wind flung upon the rocks.  
To the wild cry of shipwreck quick responding,  
He braved the billow in its strength, and led  
The hope forlorn into the deadly breach,  
And in that ocean found an early grave.  
He swam for life ; the stalwart arm struck out,  
And seemed to conquer for a time ; he rose  
And faced the storm ; but the resistless wave  
Proved stronger than his arm, and bore him down.  
Flinging upon the wreck the shorebound line,  
He sank, and rose not ;—with him all in me  
That we call life went down and disappeared.

“Unsympathizing sea, absorbing man  
And all man’s sweetest loves and tenderest hopes  
In thy cold gloom ; upon thy heartless wave  
Hither and thither tossing in thy mirth  
The corpse of age or smiling infancy,  
Of noble youth or gentle womanhood,  
To fling them on the slippery rock afar,

'Unshrouded, 'mid the tangle and the foam,  
And sending up into the brooding air  
The mocking laughter of thy greedy surge !  
Ungracious and inexorable sea !  
Unlike this mother-earth, which giveth back  
All lovingly the sacred seed we sow  
In her fond bosom thousand-thousand-fold,  
Thou graspest all, but thou restorest none ;  
Insatiable in thy hunger, in thy caves  
Far underneath the tide of moving green,  
Unfathomed and unvisited of man,  
Burying them deep, without a monument  
Or turf to mark the lone, lone place of love.  
Soon shall I follow ; life to me no more  
Is life upon this desolated earth.  
'Tis not that dying sun alone that haunts me,  
As o'er yon level forest he goes down,  
And tells me that another day is gone ;  
It is the memory of suns long set,  
Linked with old loves and joys, with looks and voices  
That have all passed, and come not back again,  
Or only come in visions of the night,  
Like the lark's song heard far above our heads,  
As from an unseen lute amid the clouds.

“ “ Care for this boy when I am gone, and may  
A brighter course than mine to him be given !  
I would be gone ; for him alone I live.  
Already has the deep home-sickness come,  
Which men of mountain-lands are said to feel  
In exile, when the visions of the past  
Rise up to view, and beckon their return.

God makes the blind bird's nest, the proverb says,  
And I am blind with sorrow ; so to Him  
And to His Christ I do commit whate'er  
Or long or short remains of life to me.  
Care for the boy, my friend, when I am gone.  
A few years longer than myself, perhaps,  
Thou may'st be spared ; oh, watch his sunbright hours,  
That no polluting shadow dim their gold ;  
From the thick evils of a perilous world  
Guard thou his youth, and help to shape his course  
In ways of uprightness when life is fresh  
And flexible, ere conscience has been seared  
And the heart petrified with early vice.  
Earth's air is dull and damp ; it suiteth not  
The tender bud or the new-opened blossom.  
Its summer's sun inebriates the soul,  
Its winter's chill freezes the springs of faith,  
And hard it is in such ungenial clime  
To bring to ripeness spring's fair promises.  
Oh, teach him to be true to man and God ;  
Set his face stedfast to the eternal light,  
The light of Him who dwelleth in the light,  
And with whom darkness has no fellowship.  
Take thou the helm, and teach him how to steer,  
To trim the sail, to watch both tide and wind,  
Shunning the sand and rock, with pilot-skill  
Rounding the headlands of a stormy age,  
Marking the beacon on the cliff or isle,  
By no false light misled on either hand ;  
Pressing with straining mast and swelling sail,  
By chart and compass, thro' time's perilous deep,

To the safe shore on which no wreck is strewn,  
Nor evil enters with its serpent-trail,  
Nor sin deforms, but righteousness and peace  
O'erflow in placid fulness, making all  
Fair beyond thought, as in time's holy dawn  
(Now long since overcast), when the first sun  
Smiled o'er the beauty of this dædal earth,  
And laid its light kiss on Armenian snows."

‘Some years he lived, then followed those he  
loved,

And sleeps with them beneath the well-known tomb.  
The child lives on, and oft his boy-bright eye  
Reads the dear names engraven on the stone,  
And then looks upward to the peaceful blue.  
What he may be when I am gone I know not,  
But what I see gives hope of what I see not :  
I mark the gleam of the true life within,  
Like star that finds its way thro' broken skies,  
Or like the first stroke of a master-pencil  
Flung on a virgin canvas, yet to be  
Spread out for many an eye to gaze upon,  
To be at once a lesson and a power.

‘That which we sow is the corruptible ;  
The incorruptible we soon shall reap.  
'Tis weakness that we lay beneath the turf ;  
The strength is coming in the day of strength,  
The age of immortality and love.  
Man measureth the known, but only God  
Measures the unknown. Man amid the seen  
Maketh his dwelling ; 'mid the unseen, God.

Man in his balances the present weighs ;  
The future, God, in more unerring scale.  
Man needeth for his path the constant light,  
Or else he stumbleth ; in the darkness, God  
Moveth in majesty as in the light,  
Darkness and light are both alike to Him.  
What is within the veil to Him we leave ;  
It will be fairer than what here we see,  
It will be more enduring than the past.

‘ Who falleth next on this sad battle-field  
Of earth, where millions have already fallen ?  
Some friend, or child, or brother, then myself ;  
Until the level turf with myriad mounds  
Is heaving, burdened with the endless slain !  
For dust we are, and shall to dust return.—  
O winds that never weep, when will ye blow,  
And flowers that never fade, when will ye spring ?  
Suns that shall never scorch nor set, when shall  
Your rising come ? O summer of the living,  
When shall your life-day dawn ? Morn without clouds,  
Rich with the freshness of celestial dew,  
When will ye light up these cold hills of time ?  
O healing Spirit, come ! There is no health  
For the great sickness of humanity  
But in thy warm breath, thy benignant touch.  
Breathe on this mortal earth, and lay thy hand  
Upon its sick-beds ; light up faded eyes ;  
Pour immortality thro’ every vein ;  
Spoil the rank graveyard of its golden dust,  
And cover the dead earth with holy life.

‘ So mused I as I left my friend’s abode,

Returning homewards, all the history  
Of our past threescore years awaking fresh  
To memory, and calling calmly up  
Thought upon thought, as scene on scene arose.

‘They are not silences that dwell around us  
Outside the curtain of this noisy earth,—  
Sorrowful silences, as men have dreamed.  
The universe is God’s, and He is *there*,  
The great inhabitant of all we see,  
And all we see not ; yet Himself distinct  
From all His handiworks, the living God,  
In whom we live and move and have our being.  
The spheres are there, with all our melodies ;  
They whom we loved are there ; they are not dead,  
But gone within the veil, to reappear  
When evening comes, like the light-buried stars.  
What we call space is not vacuity,  
Silent and cold, like a forsaken hall,  
Or wilderness untenanted by man.  
The angels’ tents are there, unseen by us,  
And angels’ songs are sung, by us unheard.  
The past does not absorb us, nor destroy  
The life which age by age is passing in  
Within its gates of shadow and of awe.  
We live upon the past, and that which we  
Call death becomes our life ; the things of old  
Are always new, yielding to us each day  
Their never-ending lessons of deep truth.  
Its strength the palm-tree drinks from the dry sand,  
And the vine feeds on ashes ; we build up  
Our daily being out of that which was,

But is not,—things and men of other times,  
The ruins of old shrines and palaces,  
The habitations of the ages gone,  
Love's relics, friendship's gifts, the faded flowers  
That when they perished left our garden bare.  
We live upon the dead, and we in turn  
Shall yet be lived upon by those who loved us,  
When, like our fathers, we have shed our tears,  
And done our work, and fought the fight of time

‘O fruitful past ! exhaustless treasure-house  
Of untold wealth ! prolific soil, in which  
The present sows itself, and out of which  
There comes not one brief harvest, but a long  
And blessed reaping for the sons of man !  
Much has the present hour in store for us  
Of happy wisdom, gleaned from each new day,  
To make us truer, nobler, holier men.  
We would go forth, and from the thriftless air  
The hoarded sunshine pluck at will ; and yet  
It is from summers long since out of sight,  
And suns long set, we gather truest life.  
The present has a near and low horizon ;  
That of the past is measureless. The world,  
The busy world, that lives in its own day,  
Lies flat upon the ground and sees no stars ;  
Its face is downward, and it clutches fast  
The golden or the iron bars of earth.  
We would look out upon the ages gone,  
Dig their old mines for treasure, search their seas  
For pearls that nowhere else on earth are found.  
The true is there, and even the fabulous,

Tho' teeming with the false and dark, at times  
Contains the true ; like Scandinavian woods,  
Where iron tales were told from iron lips  
By iron men, that teach nobility  
And hardihood of spirit to our sons.

‘The wise man’s heritage is everywhere ;  
Nowhere the fool’s, tho’ half a realm be his.  
The wise man gleans in every field, and finds  
No mine exhausted, no truth stale or poor.  
Honouring the tree, tho’ lowly, under which  
His father and his father’s father once  
Found shelter, he sits down beneath its shade.  
For old men’s words are true, he says ; old thoughts  
Grow milder and more mellow with their years,  
And their grey hairs are comely ; he would treat  
The past with reverence, yet sifting still  
The evil from the good, and wondering when  
Truth, now half-hidden, shall spring up in strength  
From the dull soil, and spread o’er every field.  
The rude, loquacious present, and the past,—  
The tranquil past,—how different in their mien  
And their instruction ! Yet how well we know  
That silent lessons root themselves the deepest,  
And bear the brightest fruit.—The file of time,  
Inaudible, eats thro’ earth’s iron bars,  
Opening the dungeons of our fettered race ;  
As once the angel, with mysterious touch,  
Threw wide the gate, and bade the messenger  
Of heavenly truth go forth in liberty  
At midnight from his Syrian prison-house,  
With, “Gird thyself and bind thy sandals on,

Fling thy cloak round thee, up and follow me.”  
Yet the cells close again, and other chains,  
Brighter perhaps, but stronger, bind the race.  
The day of true celestial liberty,  
The era of a liberated world,  
Of chains for ever broken, has not come.  
The sword of truth with its mute edge hews down  
The falsehoods of the ages everywhere ;  
Yet still they rise again. The old soil, still  
Fruitful in ill, retains its poison-roots,  
And yields a harvest of yet deadlier growth.

‘ And yet I know that ill shall have an end,  
And time’s disorder into order rise.  
The deluge that has covered this fair globe  
With its disastrous waters shall ere long  
Be dried, rolled back from off a suffering soil,  
And pent up in the caverns whence it came.  
These sifting winds of earth shall sink in balm ;  
This strife of nature shall at length be still,  
The storm-song sink into a dying fall,  
And the chafed air breathe only summer-peace.  
All life’s entangled knots unravelled then ;  
The inky stains, in millions dropped upon  
The once fair page of this unblemished earth,  
Sponged out by Him who made it fair at first !

‘ Evil ! I meet thee in my daily walk ;  
And first I tremble sorely ; then I ask,  
“ But whither goest thou ? ” Thou answerest,  
“ To where all evil ends, all sorrows die.”  
So let it be. But yet it seems as if  
The day of gladness were too long deferred.

‘Suns of the past, whose settings now are done,  
Shine out on us with all your treasured warmth  
And ancient grandeur, as when ye arose  
On Eden and its joys, or lighted up  
The peaks of Ararat, or shone upon  
Shinar and Ur and Haran, all along  
The pilgrim-life of the believing man,  
Who went where the great Voice commanded him,  
Where the celestial glory guided him,—  
He knew not whither ; or as when ye shone  
On Zion with its marble palaces ;  
Or on Moriah’s temple blazing full,  
In the rich glow of Oriental gold,  
Hour after hour around its glowing walls  
And smoking altar ; or as when ye saw  
The Roman firebrand kindle its last flames,  
The Roman battle-axe come thundering down  
Upon its cedar-work, till all was ruin,—  
Gate, wall, and rampart flung into the depths  
Of the dark hollow that engirds her round,—  
The smoking ruin bubbling up with blood.

‘Suns of the past, that lighted up old Troy,  
And wreathed fair Ida with your joyous glow ;  
And gleamed on Salamis, or bronzed the Nile ;  
And struck the lyre of Memnon, or stole thro’  
The pillars of Palmyra, and blazed o’er  
The giant gates and avenues of Thebes,  
Or watched the rising of the Pyramids,  
Or chisellings of Assyrian palaces  
And the great idols of the Nimrod fanes ;  
And saw Phoenician Carthage rise and fall,

And Rome ascend her ancient seven-hilled throne ;  
That shone upon old Britain's sullen wastes,  
And Caledonian forests, ere they knew  
A history, and stored up within their mines  
The dormant fire, that like a prisoned spirit  
Was to awake in later days, and make  
This isle the wonder of an envious world.  
Suns of the city and the silent waste !  
Suns of the sea-swept cliff and dew-bright plain,  
That gleam along the river, light the glen,  
Or gild the ocean, o'er whose ancient face  
For ages ye have shone in calm or storm !  
Suns of earth's sapphire roof, beneath whose bend  
Time's deeds have all been done, time's words all spoken,  
Time's mighty changes wrought !—I turn to you,  
And ask you to reveal the hoarded secrets,  
Evil and good, that ye have witnessed here.

‘Ye cannot tell the future, nor can see  
Into its boundless distances, tho' high  
Your station be above the hills of earth  
And clouds of time. Yet, as I look on you,  
I muse on what you one day shall behold  
Hereafter, when the ages shall unroll  
The long, long hidden good in store for man,  
And bid creation doff its withered leaves  
To clothe itself with spring,—resplendent spring,  
The spring of heavenly verdure, holy peace,  
All purity, all beauty, and all love.

‘Then heaven has come to earth, and earth is heaven ;  
The shadow of the tomb has passed away,  
And all is life ; each mortal mist is gone,

And earth is fair once more ; death is dethroned,  
Its sceptre shivered, and itself a name  
Among the fallen potentates of old,  
That moulder in dishonoured sepulchres,  
That have been, and yet are not, nor again  
Shall ever be. The breaker up of love,  
The sunderer of families, the fierce,  
Remorseless foe of man exists no more :  
The spoiler now is spoiled, the prison-house  
Is emptied, and the prisoners go forth  
With song and joy ; the long captivity  
Is now avenged ; the broken heart is healed,  
The tears are wiped, the age of light begun.

‘ Sun of the coming age, how long shall these  
Deep clouds of evil that pollute our sky  
Delay thy dawn and muffle all thy beams ?  
Rise in thy strength, and bid the night be gone ;  
Go forth in haste, O pure and perfect Light,  
Do battle with the darkness of the world,  
And overcome ; rear trophies everywhere ;  
Dissolve the dazzling error ; glorify  
The truth, and send it forth enrobed in power,  
To do its work among the sons of men.  
The frost of unbelief now covers earth,  
Whitens its fields and binds its joyous streams,  
Sparkling, yet, in that very sparkling, cold.  
Shine out, and with thy universal warmth  
Melt down this frozen darkness, dissipate  
Each vapour that would dim the eye, O Sun !  
Bid the false vanish, and the true appear.

‘ All that is true in worship must have root

In truth, eternal truth, and not in dreams.  
All that is real in service, or in that  
Which men religion call, must be the offspring  
Of truth, and not of error or of doubt.  
For he who deals with God must know the God  
To whom he cometh, and must know the way  
By which the Holy is to be approached  
By the unholy, or for prayer or praise.

‘True Light, whose place of dawn shall be the East,  
The ancient East, old birthplace of the true,  
Array thyself in majesty, and come !  
Out from fair Salem’s rock-hewn sepulchre  
Thou comest in the greatness of thy strength  
And brightness of Thy beauty, scattering gloom  
And pouring out Thy gifts of peace. Not like  
That which so fatally once issued from  
The fabled casket of the all-gifted one,  
Filled with all human woes, to be let loose  
Upon a hapless race ; but like the sweetness  
Of the rare spikenard-box of old, once broken  
To anoint the Holy One, which filled the room  
With odour, such as told of heaven itself ;—  
So from the opened sepulchre come forth,  
Fair sun, and with the fragrance hidden there,  
Immortal, irresistible, divine,  
Breathe o’er this sickly soil, and sweeten all  
Our atmosphere with everlasting health.’

## BOOK VI.

---

‘I WAS not born amid the beautiful ;  
I am no dalesman, child of rock and stream ;  
Nor have I lived among the scenes on which  
The eye of culture rests.’—So writes another,  
Whose noble memory is fragrant still.—  
‘I have known little of the laughing earth ;  
My way has been amid the toils of life,  
Through the dun smoke of furnaces, and sound  
Of hammers and of fire-blasts, day by day.  
Scant measure of the golden sun these eyes  
Have seen, and seldom has the song of birds  
Cheered me ; the music of the merry morn  
And sorrow-sweetening eve have not been mine ;  
Not mine the balm of garden or of field,  
The breath of waving woods, the chant of streams ;  
Not mine the May-buds, with their summer-eyes  
Bright as bright starlets, looking up to heaven.  
A shaded world I’ve known; and the dim years  
Have wandered on in cold monotony,  
Almost from childhood ; and yet I have felt  
A heart within me beating warm and free,  
That longed to get outside of this volcano,  
To pierce these murky wreaths that close me in,

And see the beauty of the world without,  
Of whose fair skies so many lips were speaking.  
Free blood is always warm, and the free warmth  
Expands our being's every part, and is  
A birthright of itself, a heritage  
Of strength and greatness to the common soul,  
Of which it was not otherwise the heir.  
Now strong, now weak, I knew myself all o'er ;  
Now flushed, now pale, as the veins filled and emptied,  
And the soul ebbed and flowed, immured within,  
And seeking to escape its prison-house.

‘ I was not poor nor rich, tho’ from my youth  
A son of labour, yet of labour which  
Had disciplined my soul, and taught me much.  
Men may buy gold too dear, but wisdom never ;  
At a great price had I my knowledge bought,  
Thro’ years of change, yet deemed it cheaply won.  
I did not scorn the toil, nor think myself  
Ignoble among men because of it.  
All blood is ancient, poor and rich alike ;  
I knew that all the keys of earth do not  
Hang on the rich man’s girdle ; and I saw  
All seek their own, like rowers, every man  
Pulling toward himself : I set my feet  
Upon the stedfast ground, and needed not  
To prop my fortunes with another’s wealth.  
All is not visible that helps ; there comes  
Full many a blessed angel, unawares  
And all unseen, to give us strength in hours  
Of weakness or of sorrow, when our cry  
To man is vain, and all things are against us ;

To stay us up when falling, or avert  
The perilous stroke from the quick-cleaving sword,  
Or to divert the lightning from its path,  
That would have slain us with its angry edge.

‘ I saw men lean upon their fellow-men,  
And with them fall. I saw men wildly plunge  
Into life’s faithless marshes, there to sink.  
In giddy crowds, I saw my fellow-men  
Walk over broken arches, as if all  
Were solid pavement, dropping one by one  
Into the foam below. Content to pass  
In unambitious calm to the one goal  
On beaten paths, I neither rose nor fell.  
The little bird, they say, builds little nest,  
So I, with little gold, pass thro’ this world  
As one who has few wants, and ask not much  
For a rough journey that so soon will end.  
Better the free bird of the barren moor  
Than the caged eagle of the castle hall.  
He that wants gold must dig for it ; and he  
Who seeks a harvest must both till and sow.  
Sow not the sea, nor plough the shingle-slope ;  
'Tis labour lost, 'tis time clean cast away.  
Choose the good soil and seed, nor sow the wind,  
Lest thou reap but the whirlwind ; sow not folly,  
Lest thou reap madness ; seek not mighty things,  
Nor aim at lofty place or purple pomp.  
Crowns cure no heartaches, and the blazing hall  
Of midnight, decked for pleasure’s gayest mirth,  
Pours in no light into the troubled soul.  
More than a gate of iron does it need

To keep out want, and yet it no less needs  
More than a gate of gold to keep out fear  
And sorrow from the heart in evil days,  
Or bar the entrance of the foe of foes.  
Death comes altho' no trumpet should be blown,  
As night will come even tho' no curfew sounds.  
Call that alone your own which no one here  
Has given you, and of which no man can rob you.  
Good cannot come too often or too soon,  
Nor can ill visit us too seldom, yet  
How little know we what is good or ill !  
This only do we know of certainty,  
That either we must die the early death,  
Or toil and suffer much : such is the lot  
Of man and woman ; such the discipline  
By which the soul is purged, and meetened for  
The kingdom of the sorrowless above.  
The path between the cradle and the coffin,  
Be it or long or short, is never smooth.  
The ladder to the City is the cross.  
Yet oftentimes we double all our grief  
By moody visions of imagined ills,  
And shrink from that which we shall never see.  
‘ If I would know the Highest, I must stoop  
And take the lowest place, for only there  
Will He reveal Himself, and tell me all  
The greatness of His everlasting love.  
If I would find the Highest, I must rise  
And soar above this cloud-encompassed globe.  
And yet our roots of being are beneath  
And not above this perishable soil.

In secrecy and silence our true life  
Gathers its strength and stores up all its beauty ;  
Then shoots above the surface, spreads itself  
To the fresh breeze and vital sunshine, thus  
To blossom and to ripen its rich fruit.  
The vine of life needs training ; and it asks  
Both cold and heat, the midnight and the noon.  
It roots itself in ashes, yet it climbs  
All heights ; and from its lofty terraces  
It shakes its fruit exulting, to refresh  
The toiling dwellers in the vale below.  
Let no one say, To this I'll never stoop ;  
I was not born for this ; a higher lot  
I claim than that of bondsman to the soil.  
Thou know'st not what is coming on the earth,—  
How low thou may'st be brought ere life be done.  
Say not, This brackish well I will not taste ;  
Ere long thou may'st give thanks that even this  
Is left for thee in such a burning waste.  
Nor say, Let me enjoy my lightsome youth,  
And take my fill of folly ; then repent,  
And so undo the evil. Is it so ?  
Does tainted blood thus easily run pure ?  
Are wasted years thus easily recalled ?—  
Unstring the bow, but will that heal the wound  
Made by its shaft ? Or sheathe the angry sword,—  
Will that give back the blood which it has shed ?

‘But I am wandering. Yet thoughts like these  
Would oft rise up within me as I went  
And came with easy step and easier heart,

To fill up day by day my round of toil,—  
Toil without care, whose nights were calm and sweet.

‘ Not once, nor twice, I took my eager way  
Beyond this smoky canopy ; I longed  
To gaze upon the virgin-world without,  
Unsoiled with earthly vapour, such as here  
Hideth the fair face of the universe,  
Its stars and sun, its hills and woods and flowers,  
Its buoyant streams and unpolluted sea.  
The city was my home ; as such I loved it ;  
And yet there seemed a glorious belt of light  
Girdling it round afar, which wooed me hence,  
And oftentimes drew me out beyond its gloom.  
These cities are the mysteries of earth,  
The undredged ocean-depths of human ill.  
I cannot fathom, nor can read aright  
The meaning of this human chaos, which  
Lies all around me, heap on heap, and I  
An atom of the smallest of these heaps !  
The goodness and the crime, the joy and grief,  
The song and silence, mirth and bitter tears,  
The dying and the living all are here,  
Crowded together like the ashes flung  
From its great heart of fire by some volcano.  
I love the *night* of cities, when deep sleep  
Falls on the many thousands who all day  
Toil ’mid their noise. Their noon, no doubt, is dim ;  
The sweat of labour is on each wan face,  
And pleads for rest and silence ; but their midnight  
Is like the desert when the winds are low,  
Or the great sea when tempests are at rest.

The livelong day I seem to hear but man,  
And man's monotonous, never-ending shout  
Of anger, or of bustle, or of fret :  
The night brings back the still small voice of God.  
The day has eyes, but the blind night has ears ;  
So said the ancients. Let us borrow, then,  
The ears of night, and listen, as the notes  
Come from afar upon the lonely spirit,  
To teach the wisdom which the day denies.  
I loved to gather flowers ; I bade them grow  
Beneath my window in the narrow nook  
I called a garden, tho' the dust and smoke  
Tainted their fragrance, sullied their bright bloom.  
But the pure flowers without I loved the best,  
And sought them out o'er many a pleasant mile,  
When welcome holidays brought liberty,  
And drew my steps to moor or field or hill,  
Leaving behind the city's sultry smoke.  
The orchis of the marsh I plucked ; the bindwood,  
That on the hedges hangs its white and purple ;  
The primrose and the daffodil, that scent  
First summer's maiden air ; the buttercup,  
Spangling the meadow with its brilliant gold ;  
The timid violet, that hides the bud  
From which the sweetness breathes ; the pimpernel,  
That prophesies of coming rain or sunshine ;  
The star of Bethlehem, which I have heard  
Grows goodliest in Judea's desolate vales ;  
The lovelorn lily, leaning o'er her stem  
And spilling her fresh odours on the ground ;  
The sweet-pea, sweetest of the sweet in scent,

With all the rainbow on its blushing buds ;  
The lily of the valley, sheathed in green ;  
The snowdrop, smiling o'er departed winter,  
And yellow crocus, singing, " Spring is come."  
I found few flowers erect ; they droop, some more,  
Some less, however loved and visited,  
Hanging their heads upon the stem, afraid  
To look straight at the sun, or take the stroke  
Of the descending rain ; save only one,  
The water-lily, as it floats upon  
The tranquil lake, and gazes ever up  
In rain or sunshine on the welcome heavens.  
Which shall I be, I said,—the one erect,  
Fearless of heat and storm, or bending o'er  
Upon our mother earth, like all the rest ?  
Drooping or upright, let me still inhale  
The breath of God, and drink the light of heaven.

‘ Some miles away, unsoiled by smoke and dust,  
Spread out a spacious moor ; its solitude  
To me was sweet society. Slow years  
Have passed since last I lay amid its heath ;  
Yet, fresh as yesterday, I call it back.  
Round yon green hillock the faint-scented broom  
Entwines a coronet of matchless gold ;  
Here the sweet-briar, with its fragile rose,  
Hard by some sapling birch exhales its joy ;  
There the bog-myrtle, covering miles of moor,  
Wastes its wild perfume ; and the meadow-queen  
Sweeter than all, and beautiful as sweet,  
Adorns the marsh. O untrained loveliness,  
And odours as untutored, of these wilds,

That have no eye to see them, and no fond  
Enthusiast like myself to drink their breath ;  
Of what a glorious world ye form a part,  
And that no mean one ! Wondrous wilderness !  
Uncivilised and barren, yet how fair !  
I would not blot you from the face of earth,  
Nor turn you into gardens. Hold your own  
Against the encroaching culture of the age,  
And sparkle on, ye gems of ancient days,  
Pure relics of old nature in its prime.

‘ One flower I found, and loved above the rest,  
The rose of roses did it seem to me ;  
I plucked it from the garden where it grew,  
And brought it gently home to grow in mine.  
You knew its worth and loveliness. Bright eve  
Was that when first she stood beneath my roof  
And lighted up my dwelling,—fair and young,  
Her lot seemed glad, for holy love was in it,  
That maketh all things bright ; our cup ran o’er.  
We praised the Giver of the gushing joy,  
Walking together o’er the restless earth,  
With faces set to the eternal hills.  
Good to be loved and good to love it was ;  
To be, each to the other, all in all ;  
Sweet to be little known, and to retire  
Into each other, like the flowers at even,  
Closing their petals till the morning break.  
Nearest to God, they say, is he who has  
The fewest wants : our wants were small and few ;  
There seemed no place to wound us on. The storm

That struck the tree-tops or the ambitious spire,  
Passed over us ; we were not high enough  
To feel its rage. Yet with the wedding-ring  
Come cares as well as joys ; for sorrow lifts  
The poor man's latch, and sits down at his hearth.  
The valley that escapes the upper storm  
Receives the flood that rushes from the hills.

‘Three children filled our home with infant-mirth,  
Each voice a melody, each face a flower ;  
They shone and left us, not to reappear  
Until the grave gives up its holy dust.

‘Our little ones all died in summer-time :  
No winter's frost thickened their parting breath ;  
No cutting March-wind smote their tender cheeks,  
Nor chilling snow upon their coffins fell,  
But only sunshine. There was kindly grass  
To lay above the mould, and roses fresh  
To sprinkle on the turf, a fair blue sky  
To cover all, and tell that God is love,  
And that which sin has done will love undo.

I thought it strange that summer breath should kill ;  
And yet 'twas better thus to lay them down,  
Swathed in soft sunshine, likest to themselves,  
And that amid such brightness they should pass  
Up to the fields which no wan winter chills,  
And where they rest until the wondrous dawn.  
Day of the great undoing ! When wilt thou  
Arrive to smite the spoiler, pluck the spoil  
From his unpitying hands, refill the heart,  
Aching and empty, with its treasured gems,  
That for a season have thus passed away ?

When shall the Healer of the sick earth come?  
Creation sighs for Him ; man's weary frame  
Asks for His coming ; maimed humanity  
Bids Him make haste ; each deathbed crieth, Come ;  
Each broken heart appeals to His great pity,  
And asks Him not to tarry ; earth's deep graveyards,  
Filled with the relics of lost love, cry out  
And say, How long ? Man's never-resting heart,  
Drooping by reason of His absence, pleads  
For His arrival, turning wistfully  
To the still clouded east, expecting dawn.  
O day of promised health, when wilt thou come ?  
The fore-glow is not yet upon the clouds,  
And the tall peaks are still asleep in gloom ;  
The snowy sheath upon the ancient hills  
Is still without its streak of morning gold.  
The day-star lingers, and the ocean sighs,  
The forest waves its boughs, and eagerly  
Beckons the lingering sunshine. Morn of morns,  
When wilt thou dawn, and bring the eternal noon ?

Another child was born to us ;—alas !  
That life should bring death with it, and that joy  
Should introduce the sorrow and the night.  
Strange sickness smote the mother when her child  
Was born ; the freshness faded from her face ;  
Her cheek grew wan, and yet her eye was bright ;  
Her step was feeble, but her spirit firm ;  
Her voice was faint, and yet her words were strong.  
Within the drooping heart there seemed to sit  
A blessed angel, whispering peace divine,  
And telling of a love that could not fail,—

A love whose cup of honeyed wine can make  
The wormwood sweet, and bid the heart be still,  
Lifting the sinking spirit into strength.

She knew the arm on which the helpless lean,  
The resting-place where weary souls sit down,  
Footsore and fainting, on Time's rugged road,  
Beneath the heat of life's unsparing noon.

‘She loved and watched and nursed her infant joy,  
Not long to love and watch and nurse below.  
Each anniversary of her great grief,  
As summer months brought round the well-known days,  
Deepened the shadow of the past upon her,  
And made the earth appear less truly home.  
We spoke the words of comfort, and her eye  
Kindled ; but kindled most whene'er we told  
Of the reunion, where the broken links  
Of mortal life become immortal chains,  
Where all is endless fellowship, and where  
The living splendour of the jasper wall  
Shuts out the foe of life. Our words availed  
For short relief ; the shadow came again.  
The rivers ask not is it much or little  
That they can pour into the craving sea,  
But each one giveth as he hath to give :  
So gave we to her, in her soul's sore thirst  
And weariness, such as we had to give  
Of gentle truth, and she was comforted ;  
Yet needed to be comforted again  
By a far wiser comforter than we,—  
By Him who said, My peace I give to you,  
Let not your heart be troubled nor afraid.

‘One night she hushed her babe to sleep ; lay down  
To rest beside the crib that held her treasure,  
And sleep the mother’s ever wakeful sleep.  
The baby slept, the mother closed her eyes ;  
The baby woke, the mother slumbered on ;  
The baby cried, the mother heard no cry.  
The morning came, the mother opened not  
Her eyes upon her darling ; her stiff fingers  
Still grasped the cradle-string, the cradle rocked not.  
She had gone up from her last couch on earth  
To one above, to wait the meeting-time  
Between herself, her husband, and her babe.  
Her last words, dropping from her lips that even,  
Ere she lay down upon the quiet bed,  
From which she never rose, were, “We shall be  
Like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”  
Her grave is in the churchyard, just between  
Her little ones, and on the stone her name  
Carved simply, with one beaming text above :  
“Till the day break and shadows flee away.”

‘Each cross has its inscription, and on mine  
Was written legibly, “That which I do  
Thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know here-  
after.”

And each cross has its well, deep, deep below,  
And inexhaustible,—a well of life  
For after-days of drought and barrenness.  
Each cross, too, has its rainbow, light on cloud  
Cast sweetly down, that all may not be dark.  
My rainbow seemed to break, but yet upon  
The fragment, as it hung upon the cloud,

Right o'er a marble tomb, I read the words,  
"The sun shall be no more thy light by day."

' Small sorrows fret us, great ones overawe ;  
The petty weaken, but the huge make strong,  
And strip off the unreal and untrue.  
The storm has grandeur in it as it splits  
The stubborn rock, and sends its boulders down  
Into the valley ; but the peevish gust,  
Which in the self-will of its idleness  
Tears the gay buds to pieces, is made light of.  
The little cares of common life but vex ;  
Misprized or overlooked, they pass away ;  
The large ones lay the spirit in the dust,  
Then lift it up again to higher greatness.

' O sacred fire, which burneth not in vain,  
Extracting all the sweetness of the incense,  
Filling the temple with its gracious odour,  
And sending up to heaven the purgèd praise !

' O inward bread, of which the sated world  
Knows nought, in this its day of luxury,  
When all is feasting, and the high-heaped board,  
That scorneth fasting, feedeth every lust !

' O mighty spell of God, that disenchants  
This world's bewildering beauty, strips the veil  
Of unreal glory from the face of earth,  
And shows us what the things around us are !  
Out from the clamour of the thousand sounds  
That take all music out of life, we are  
As in a moment snatched, and made to dwell  
Alone, in silent converse with that world  
Where song is sweetest, into which the loved

Have gone, and into which our hearts have followed,  
As our far truer home ; from which there comes  
A richer melody than we have known ;  
Whose silence seemeth but a softer sound,—  
The lowest note on the wide-ranging scale  
Of perfect harmony, a note that suits  
So well the solitude of sorrow's cell.

‘This home of mine, once filled with household wealth,  
And rich in love that seemed imperishable,  
Was now a shipwrecked vessel : four already  
Washed overboard, the rest to follow soon.  
But who that has not known the loss can tell  
The desolations of the hearth, when those  
Who gathered round it once in childhood's joy  
Have all been taken, and each chair is empty ?  
He who has crossed the river knows its depth,  
Others upon the brink can only guess.  
Sorrow lights up the cross, and takes us back  
To the old rock of Golgotha, when night  
Came down upon the soul of Him who knew  
Nor sin nor darkness, dwelling in the light  
That fills eternity with life and day.  
We see the Mourner, Him who bare our griefs  
And carried all our sorrows, moving on  
From the cold, stony cradle to the cross,  
Under the sentence of a righteous death,  
Because of those whose guilt was on His head ;  
And the old hymn swells out in plaintive notes,  
As in the ages gone, that tells of all  
He bore : “*Lugete pacis angeli.*”  
‘Beneath the shadow of the covering cross,

Where danger cannot reach us, and where all  
Life's evil is transfigured into good,  
Faith finds her refuge in the day of ill,  
And hope re-plumes itself for higher flight.  
True hope is always lofty, and presents  
The skyward side of morning to the soul,  
Bidding it look beyond these mist-wrapt hills.  
The hope which millions live on is a shadow  
Which never turns to substance, a thin vapour,  
On which the sun is shining for an hour.  
Some live on this, and with them the good time  
Is always coming ; and some live on dreams,  
Which never grow to waking history,  
Nor make a doer of the dreamer ; some  
Feed upon gloom, and can see nothing bright  
Even in a star, or brighter than a star,  
The happy face of laughing childhood ; some  
Live upon mirth and roses, smiles and song,  
As if their being were an insect's day,  
A swallow's life upon a sunny lake.  
Not all are glad who sing ; how many here  
Utter a mirth which they have never felt !  
Not all are sorrowful who, looking round  
With shaded forehead, and with fervid eye,  
And grave pale face of pity, sometimes wet  
With tears of love, on a self-cheated world,  
Would fain relieve the anguish that they see,  
And share their own deep ever-serious joy  
With men whose laughter is but hollowness.

‘ It is not everything that gold can buy ;  
What man needs most is far beyond its reach.

The joy that fills and ends not is of heaven,  
And all heaven's gifts are, like the light of noon,  
Free to the sons of men, or rich or poor.  
There is no evil eye above, to grudge  
Another's good ; 'tis only upon earth  
That envy dwells. Love fills the heaven of heavens ;  
For all that God has given or daily gives,  
The least or largest of His liberal gifts,  
Are unbought, like the dew upon the mead,  
His own free love the fountain-head ; a love  
In which all blessing is contained for man ;  
The love that gloweth in the sun and moon,  
In the rich concave of the bending arch  
Or face of this all-hospitable earth,  
Where love once walked in lowly majesty,—  
Where heaven descended with its gifts of peace,—  
Where the great life was lived, the great death died,  
That death might die for ever, life might live,  
And the deep grave be emptied of his prey.

‘ When we are born into the world we weep,  
We know not why,—some sudden pain, perhaps ;  
Some chill that strikes us from the wintry world  
On which we all unconsciously are entering ;  
Or some foreboding of the perilous future,  
As if the new-born soul did prophesy  
In sad but inarticulate wail, of days  
To come ; as if the curtain had been lifted  
For a brief moment, and the vista given  
To infant eyes of shaded scenes afar,  
The changes of the threescore years and ten.  
Thus life beginneth in unconscious tears,

And each day onwards does the cause reveal.  
The prophet-infant looks before and weeps,  
As did the Hebrew babe upon the Nile.  
The old look back into the wrinkled past,  
And learn the causes of their childhood's tears.  
For, each day, sorrow greets us on our way,  
His face becomes familiar like a friend's ;  
We bid him stay one moment, while we ask  
His errand : " Whence, and whither, friend, to-day ? "  
He answers, " Even where I oft have been ;  
The way I know, and thou shalt know it too."

‘ Yet to how many are such lessons vain !  
Sorrow goes past them, like an empty cloud  
That brings no rain, but merely for an hour  
Darkens their sky. They weep, then wipe away  
Their tears, and life assumes its smiles again.  
More gaily than before their barque moves on,  
The wrecks that lie beneath it all forgotten,  
And the rude breakers of the wind-lashed sea  
Smoothed into silver 'neath a golden sun.

‘ Learn well, and learn from friend and enemy,  
From sorrow and from joy ; learn and unlearn.  
'Tis hardest to unlearn, for the warped will  
Resists the teaching and repels the teacher ;  
Erasure of long error from the mind  
Demands a sharp and skilful discipline.  
But yet more tedious is the process needed  
For straightening of a long-perverted will,  
The undoing and unlearning of the past.  
Trust not the progress of a boastful age ;  
Each age confutes old falsehoods, but begets

Others as sad as those which it explodes.  
Could things be done twice over, grave men tell us,  
They would be rightly done, and what one day  
Was done amiss would be set straight the next.  
As if men never erred but once ! So speak  
The oracles of time ; and yet I know not  
If such has ever been the pliancy  
Even of one human will. I find, alas !  
The foolish and the wise alike refuse  
To learn and to unlearn, tho' both are prompt  
To teach, and wonder why their words are vain.  
'Tis not for want of true words truly spoken  
That man remains untaught in every age.  
Adown the shaken leaf or sloping rock  
The raindrop glides ; down the hard mountain-side  
The streamlet pours itself ; and yet both drop  
And streamlet pass away without a trace  
Into the valley, thence into the sea.  
And yet no true word dies ; no seed is lost,  
Tho' buried long. In places and at times  
Least looked for, it reveals its hidden life.

‘ Strange schools of earth, in which the heirs of heav'n  
Are trained and taught. Sore lessons these we learn—  
Hard for the heart, but harder for the will,  
Beat into us by bitter discipline.  
The emptying more difficult we find  
Than all the filling ; the rubbish-heaps  
Resist displacement from the well. Undoing  
Taxes our will more heavily than doing ;  
Passive endurance frets us more than toil.  
We wonder at the length of chastisement ;

Our weaknesses we know not, nor believe  
That pain can strengthen, and that heavenly fruit  
Can ripen in the dark, or that the trees  
Of God are braced by the cold winds of time.  
He who to manhood grows without a grief  
Is but half-rooted ; with a will untamed  
And self undisciplined, he seeks his own.  
To him no mellowness of being comes.  
First taste the bitter and then drink the sweet,  
So shalt thou sweetness know. First face the storm,  
So shalt thou know the gladness of the calm.

‘ Such is the heavenly order here below.  
God means it so ; tho’ often in the dark  
He worketh, and men see not what He does,  
Or what He aims at. But it comes at length ;  
Age after age uncoils itself, and drops  
From the long skein of past eternities.  
Each little life of man, each longer life  
Of nations, is the evolving of a purpose  
Too deep for us to fathom. Yet we live  
As if the universe were ours, and man  
The mighty potentate, whose sovereign will  
Might do or undo, build up or destroy.  
The spirit of the age has never been  
Upon the side of God. Who would be true  
To the great Voice above, must learn to brave  
And not to foster or to lead that spirit ;  
*Against*, not *with*, the torrent he must steer ;  
To fight, not to obey, the imperious breeze ;  
Quick to discern the true significance  
Of each new phase of action or of thought.

Self-nurtured, self-instructed, and self-ruled,  
The giddy peoples of this drunken earth  
Are all astir and rampant ; each his flag  
Of liberty unfurls, and marches on,  
With progress as his banner-word aloft,  
Waving amid the shouts of victory,  
To some unknown and mist-encompassed goal.  
The frantic falsehoods of delirious seers,  
Who teach us that the Christ need not have died,  
Or tell us that the Christ has not yet come,  
Are listened to like heavenly oracles.  
And how shall all this doing be undone,  
These words unsaid, and the true speech of God  
Go over earth, supplanting human lies ?  
And how shall creaturehood be lifted up  
Into a stedfast rest, that shall secure  
Its various parts of matter and of mind  
Against another fall, it may be, more  
Dark and complete ? How shall we be assured  
That no unlooked-for ruin shall o'ertake  
Its glory and perfection as at first ?

‘ Twice over has its well-made axle snapped :  
Once when the angels sinned, and once again  
When our first father fell, and with him drew  
This perfect earth. And what man did of old,  
Man shall undo,—the Man whom God hath sent,  
And yet shall send again, when earth has reached  
Maturity of evil. With Him comes  
Stability for creaturehood ; the new  
And perfect order of that universe,  
Whose axle, forged upon no human anvil,

And tempered with no earthly heat and cold,  
Shall never break again nor loose its hold.  
The Christ of God becomes the living centre  
Of all things ; men and angels, heaven and earth,  
Now gravitate to Him, and in Him find  
Eternal being, stedfast as His own,  
Divine security for bliss like His,  
With whom they now are one for evermore.

‘ Brief is the sternest discipline of time,  
Its aim and end perfection ; step by step  
We rise even when we seem to sink, grow strong  
Even when we seem to faint, and win the fight  
When all things are against us ; one by one  
We do the life-work God assigns to us,  
And wait the issue. ’Tis not by the strong  
In numbers, or in weapons, or in skill,  
That God has won the battles of the earth,  
But by the single arm that took its power  
From Him alone, in conscious helplessness,  
Confronted with the hosts of evil here.  
’Tis with the few and feeble that God sides ;  
The bruised reed or shepherd’s sling is all  
The weapon which faith asks for, when the hosts  
Of darkness muster. Armed with such as these,  
Calmly she marches on without a fear  
To the great battle-field which angels watch,  
Spectators of the strife and victory.

‘ Brief battle ! though to weary combatants  
Full long it seems. Short day of toil, tho’ sore  
To those who bear the burden and the heat  
Of the oppressive noon. This broken spirit

Looks for the great upbinding ; this worn frame  
Sighs for the rest, in silent sympathy  
With all creation, whose deep groans it hears  
And answers, longing for the promised age,  
When nature, long unhealed, shall feel the touch  
Of priestly hands to renovate and bless.  
The disinfectant of the world's foul air  
Is on its way : the Healer comes at length.  
He speaks, and the world's fever passes off ;  
Earth's primal health and peace return ; the voice  
That said to the dark tempest, " Peace, be still,"  
Speaketh again ; creation owns the voice,  
Sea, sky, and earth subsiding into calm,  
The lightning sheathed, the thunder heard no more.

‘ Loud tho' the blast be, it will fall at last,  
And out of it the genial zephyr comes.  
Let fall the anchor till the gale be o'er ;  
Ride out the hurricane, then speed thee on ;  
Or better still, fill all thy sails with it,  
That it may bring thee sooner to thy haven.  
The wildest storm that ever rent the air,  
The fiercest earthquake that has ever shaken  
Earth's cities into chaos, never moved  
This solid globe from its smooth, silent course.  
So let the storms pass over us, and so  
Let life's most perilous earthquakes spend their strength.  
We move along to our appointed goal,  
In the long afterhood of coming time,  
Unswerving on our orbit, undisturbed  
By shocks that vibrate over land and sea.  
‘ Live so as to be missed, it has been said ;

So shall this life of thine prove truly great.  
Live so as thou shalt not be missed, I say,  
So shall thy life approve itself still greater  
And more complete. The pilot is not missed  
When the tossed vessel in the harbour rests ;  
September doth not miss the sower's hand,  
If he hath nobly done his work in spring ;  
We do not miss the sun of yesterday,  
Nor shall we miss to-day's when comes to-morrow.

‘There is but one true Sower ; He hath done  
His work for ever, not to be done again.  
He sowed, we reap,—’tis well ; and yet again  
We sow and others reap ; so goes the round  
Of the great work of God on earth, each man  
Knit to the other, and all knit to Him  
Who is the centre of all work and life.

‘Compassed about with miracles, we move  
Across this earth, beneath that watchful sun.  
The mighty things of sight and sound and touch  
Gird us like mountains ; we in midst of them  
So poor and little. Undiscovered beauty  
Hideth in ambush everywhere, ere long  
To come forth in its fulness ; on each side  
Perfection unenfolded, waiting for  
The day of the unfolding ; life-wells filled,  
And ready to o'erflow, when the quick touch  
Of potent influence from long pent-up love  
Shall let their fulness loose to do its work  
Upon a world where only death has reigned.

‘Dead nature is not God ; and living nature  
Is no mere thing of law, without a will,

Insentient all, developing itself  
In blind submission to some innate force.  
Oh, is the living music of the earth,  
Are the deep harmonies of night and day,  
The thrush's carol on the evening elm,  
The turtle's low note from the olive-bough,  
Or, sweeter still than all of these, the voice  
Of man and woman as it utters all  
The hidden melodies of human hearts,—  
Are these all soulless, force and matter all ?  
Mere steam-power motions ?—hammer-strokes upon  
Dull rock or iron ?—fate-begotten sounds,  
Whose heavy clank reveals nor mind nor will ?'

## BOOK VII.

---

'BUT let me tell about the babe I spoke of,  
My one remaining flower.

The sweets of earth  
Had lost their sweetness now. To me its joys  
Were only like the summer stars, that shine  
Briefly and faintly, lost in other light  
Just gone below the horizon's edge, or like  
The wanness of the alabaster moon,  
That tries to outshine the sun. But in him life  
Seemed to come back again. No after-joys  
Pluck from the head the grey hairs sown by sorrow ;  
And yet he was a staff to lean upon,  
A well of sparkling water in the waste.  
'Twas something to have him to live for here ;  
To have the young fair face to look upon,  
Where rich fresh being sat on rosy lips,  
The cheek of childhood bright as apple-bloom ;  
To have him with me in my daily walks,  
He upon me and I on him still leaning,  
Inseparable. And still I seem to see  
His slender frame and mark his airy tread,  
Graceful as the light step of mountaineer,  
All childhood in its motion. We set forth

When the grey wind of morning shook the heath  
And gathered up its fragrance for the lark,  
Whose notes came trickling down the sunlight, meet  
Reward for song. That song was his and mine ;  
We loved it as we loved the starry dew  
Beneath our feet upon the mountain steep ;  
We loved it for its purity and love ;  
It seemed the melody of light itself,  
Of light beyond the clouds,—far-travelled song,  
The outer echo of some heavenly chord,  
Inaudible in this our lower sphere.

‘ Years have been drifting onward, and the child  
Has overtaken boyhood ; and the boy,  
His cheek aglow with the rich red of dawn,  
Has softly budded into dreaming youth,—  
The youth of fervour, quick with throbbing thought,  
Thinking of what he yet may be or do :  
For as age looks behind, so youth before  
Gazes with greedy eye ; both flee the present,  
And both prefer the distant to the near,  
And both would drink of fountains far away.  
Gay hopes, like sunbeams, fill the fervid air,  
And the warm pulse rises to fever-heat.  
He drains the cup which only once we taste  
In its delicious overflow of sweetness,—  
The cup which comes unbidden and unsought,  
Filled with strange nectar for the thirsty lip,—  
Love’s summer-joy, the hydromel of time,  
As in bright haste it passes swiftly by,  
And touches, as it goes, youth’s burning tongue.

‘Life’s pillared vestibule, thick-wreathed with bay,  
And sweet with odours of the morn, has now  
Been passed. He has gone in, with song and smile,  
Into the temple, knowing not what there  
Of good or ill may be revealed to him.

‘Then breaks the dream, and the absorbing spell  
Loosens its hold upon the quivering brain.  
False life, like vapour, vanishes ; the true  
Is waking up ; the boy is putting on  
The man. The falling blossoms now prepare  
For being’s large development, the fruit,  
To which the slow and varying processes  
Of unripe life were working silently ;  
For not at once awoke the life divine,  
So long within him struggling, but suppressed.  
‘Twas not the sudden burst of tropic sun ;  
‘Twas not the sleeper’s instant start at dawn,  
When from his couch he springs to meet the morn,  
Emerging from night’s many-coloured dreams  
Or sullen mists into the tranquil sunshine :  
Not thus it was that life awoke within him,  
The life that dies not when all else has died ;  
But slowly, as the spirit of the dawn  
Thro’ the wan twilight struggles into day.

‘Now light, now darkness, spread themselves above  
The feverish ocean of his sleepless mind ;  
Shadow and sunshine strove for mastery.  
All yesterday was calm, to-day the gale  
Has dragged his anchors ; all true things this hour  
Fill him, thrust out the next by all things false.  
The certain and uncertain fought within him,

Each for entire dominion, satisfied  
With nothing save the whole surrendered soul.  
Real and unreal, wide and narrow, mist  
And brilliant noonshine, mixed, or side by side,  
All came and went, and came and went again ;  
Were welcomed, then dismissed, caressed, then loathed,  
As, with new aspect and new argument,  
Hour after hour they plied their varied art,  
Soliciting his early faith and love.

“ Lie down amid the gardens of the earth,  
And spread the rose-leaves under you ; there rest  
Amid the odour and enchantment which  
The magic sunshine wakens up around ;  
Feed on the lotus-leaf, and drink thy fill  
Of pleasure’s purple cup, o’erbrimming here ;  
Live upon creature-loveliness and love ;  
Enjoy the beauty of this siren world,  
Locked in its arms and surfeited with song,  
Apart from toil and tempest ; isolate  
Thy life from other lives, fence off thyself  
From the rough desert of humanity,  
Or draw a curtain round thee to shut out  
The ruggedness that mars thy silken rest ;  
Chase the rude darkness from thee, and sit down  
To festival ’neath midnight’s glowing lamps ;  
Woo nature to be gentle, and to give  
The calm of night without the gloom, the flush  
Of noon without its sultriness, the breath  
Of the gay breeze without its angry fire,  
And make once more a Paradise below.”  
So whispered from within a silver voice,

And straight he sought to follow, full of hope.  
Others had tried all this, and only failed,  
But he might better prosper. Every effort  
Needs not to end in failure ; some may find  
The undiscovered islands of the blest,  
Brighter Hesperides than those of which  
Old poets oft had sung, unvexed with storm,  
Unvisited with pain or mortal weakness ;  
Where disappointment comes not, and where fear  
Of a dark future is unknown ; where death  
Has no dominion, but where life, all fair,  
Brightens without a change thro' dateless days,  
And all is health untainted : why should man  
Live but to suffer and to toil and die ?  
Must the old human heartache still remain  
Uncured ? Must the old fever of the brain  
Send its hot poison thro' the helpless soul  
Without the assuaging anodyne ? If this  
Be human destiny, then he at least  
Will be above it. For shall his fresh life,  
Full of far-ranging thoughts and unsung songs,  
Be scattered like the sea-spray, or absorbed  
Like starlight in the greedy clouds of morn ?  
Shall his great plan dissolve or die unspoken,  
Like the unchiselled statue, held in bonds  
Within its marble prison-house, from which  
Only some master's touch can set it free ?  
Shall he, like the great Titan on the cliff  
Of Caucasus, look helpless down upon  
A suffering race, himself a sufferer too,  
Under the pressure of some will or law

Which ought to be resisted, not obeyed,  
Which, as unrighteous, ought to be repealed ?

‘No ; he will search the hidden cause of evil,  
And having searched, undo it, setting free  
This fate-chained earth with its long-burdened race,  
Infusing health into its languid veins,  
And every ill expelling, even the last,—  
The death that darkens all things ; every part  
Moulding to beauty, making perfect all  
That is imperfect, taking out the sting  
Which has so long been left to rankle deep  
And poison all creation. He will be  
The prism, which with the occult energy  
Of its dissevering force spreads softly out,  
Like beaten gold, the riches of the light,  
Braided in sevenfold lustre. Shall the dust  
He treads upon be lord of him who treads it,  
And in self-will defy the will of man,  
Or yield obedience to some canon dark,  
Some law of mystery, which baffles mind  
To fathom or to foil ? What though he should  
Perish in such a work ? It would be well,  
If o'er his tomb a new world should be built,  
Freer and more amenable to man,  
Less subject to a superhuman will ;  
With broader laws, and rescripts less severe  
To human frailty ; th’ evil and the good  
Less sharply and less sternly separated ;  
The penalties less harsh and rigorous,  
Death’s ancient and inexorable statute  
Repealed for ever ; disease expelled, and pain ;

The processes of nature made to work  
More wisely, and with less of waste ; no sands  
Of idle barrenness ; no obstructive cliffs  
Sundering the nations ; no unthrifty clouds  
Raining upon the sterile wilderness,  
Or yet more sterile sea ; no withered leaves,  
And no abortive blossoms ; no chill plains  
Of numbing ice, and no intemperate sun  
Scorching the blood ; no sharp rebellious fork  
Of fiery lightning, tearing into shreds  
The great Creator's handiwork, undoing  
What had been done, unmaking at a stroke  
What had been made of beauty and of strength.

‘ He would not live for self. The generous sun  
Illumines not himself ; the city lamp  
Flings all its light upon the passers-by,  
And then gives place to the eclipsing dawn ;  
The river flows not to refresh itself,  
But dies in watering others. So will he  
Go forth upon a mission of brave love,  
Be a great power on earth against all ill,  
Drain the rank moisture of this marshy globe,  
And make it all one fair Elysium.  
He will beat down all error, lift up truth ;  
He will expose all hollowness, and be  
The model of the real in this untrue  
And shallow world ; he will bring down his axe  
Upon all folly, or in men or states,  
On all misrule and wrong : let the globe crack,  
And the high archway of the vaulted heavens  
Dissolve ; what matters it, so justice lives ?

His walk thro' earth, on to the infinite  
Beyond, shall be the burning march of truth,  
Part of a long torch-lighted way, or part  
Of the great causeway of the universe,  
Stretching far up and on, he knew not whither,  
Amid celestial avenues of stars,  
That blaze on either side like lamps by night  
And suns by day ; a wondrous prophet-march,  
A great self-sacrifice, to tell for ever  
On a self-loving and luxurious world !

‘ Nobly he wrought, but wrought in vain ; it was  
Not one thing, but a thousand, that refused  
To be amended by his zealous love.  
The one rebellious stone of Sisyphus,  
Rebounding and rebounding to the vale,  
Was nothing to the innate, inscrutable power  
Which met and thwarted him. He was as one  
Bent upon smoothing ocean’s myriad wrinkles ;  
All that he did seemed vain,—the work of one  
Trying to chain the tempest, tame the thunder,  
Or quench the fierce volcano’s furnace-fires.  
He felt himself alone, in front of some  
Huge but invisible power that mocked his strokes.  
Some deeper law than he could understand,  
With headlong but most calm resistlessness,  
Impelled this dark confusion on and on,  
Like thunder-rack before the unseen breeze ;  
Some unknown code of everlasting rule,  
Working with secret certainty and force,  
And giving forth the inexorable canons  
Of a deep-seated Nemesis, that crossed

All other laws, and would not be defied  
Or disenchanted ; a stupendous will,  
Embodying persistent righteousness,  
And by relentless pressure urging on  
All human things to some still future hour  
Of grander retribution, when the Judge,  
At the assize which yet shall right all wrongs,  
And place eternal good upon the throne,  
Shall deal with the dark annals of the race,  
And by His sentence in that day of truth  
Shall bring to light the all-impelling law,  
Which had in awful muteness been at work  
Thro' ages past, deep in creation's core,  
Ordering and yet disordering all things here,  
Both good and evil, regulating, yet  
Perturbing every orbit, as by some  
Invisible magnet, which no power nor skill  
Of man can reach to neutralize or bind.

‘Not in great things alone he fought and failed.  
The little things that lay in the plain path  
Of daily life perplexed him most : they seemed  
So feeble, yet so stubborn in resistance,  
So slight, and yet they mastered him. He might not  
Have wondered that the storm refused his sway ;  
That the red eye of war still glared, and still  
Her armies mustered, steeping earth in blood ;  
Or that the hollow and discoloured cheek  
Of pestilence, or the clean teeth of famine  
Still showed themselves, as in the ages past ;—  
But why should this poor poisonous reptile breed  
And crawl upon the soil which man calls his,

Only to carry pain and death to man ?  
Why should this worthless weed grow all unsown,  
Or the keen thorn shoot from the branch unsheathed ?  
Why should so many tears fall hotly down,  
So many hopes lie buried in the sand,  
So many joys like early spring-blooms die ?

‘ The mighty and the mean things of the earth  
Yield to some living universal statute :  
Not fate, but conscious, ever-acting will,  
Wise, just, and loving, everywhere at work  
Where least observed ; some influence  
Which worketh not by chance, but overpowers,  
Armed with the Judge’s mighty fiat, all  
Opposing wills, in awful righteousness  
Revealing God’s eternal estimate  
Of every evil thing ; with its most sure  
And ever accurate tho’ noiseless touchstone  
Testing each word and deed, and making known  
The inevitable pain that tracks even now  
Each devious step, and all the endless ills  
Which, in a thousand forms, one small departure  
From the perfection of the perfect rule  
Brings over man and earth. The falling leaf  
Troubles the air, and the vibration spreads  
Wide over space. The feeble drop of blood  
Falls on the ocean, and the crimson stain  
Discolours each blue wave that swells or sinks  
With the advancing or receding tide.

‘ Strong is the will of man ; but stronger still  
This other will, veiled though it be, and voiceless,  
That meets him like a spectre everywhere,

And brands the sin he would extenuate  
As the mishap of weakness, with the strong  
And never obsolete sentence of the Judge :  
“ The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.”

‘ And yet no Até, no Erinnys here !  
Nor fate, nor fury, binding heaven and earth,  
Defying gods and men, as classic myth  
Has sung, does this resistless will display.  
It is the will of loving righteousness ;  
Not jealousy of man and human joy,  
As the far-travelled Greek would have us know ;  
But the wise purpose, ever on the side  
Of good, and wishing well to man in all  
His sorrow or his joy, and hating only  
The falsehood and the darkness and the sin.  
The true God loveth truth ; His will,  
Like a sharp ploughshare turning up the clods  
Of earth, or like the strong invisible helm  
Guiding the ship thro’ storm, brings us to good  
Through the long ages of opposing ill,  
In ways undreamt of by earth’s wisest souls.

‘ So found ere long the fond enthusiast,  
Who sought out potent herbs to heal man’s wounds,  
And to regenerate the worn-out world  
With simples culled from its own fields, which have  
No power to reach the core of human ill.  
He failed, for evil was too strong for him ;  
But yet, in failing, and returning home  
Saddened, but yet not sour nor unbenign,  
From unsuccessful warfare, learned to hope.  
Anger and haste, they say, good counsel mar ;

And he sat calmly down to meditate  
On that which has been, is, and yet may be,  
Wiser and less impetuous than before.  
He might be wrong, and he will patiently  
Seek out the right and true ; tho' pride may murmur,  
Better to ask the road than go astray ;  
Better another's pilotage than shipwreck.

‘One virus from the one sad tree of ill,  
Eaten in Paradise, flows thro' our veins,  
And taints our bodies with each dire disease,  
Ending in death. One breath of withering frost,  
Issuing from Eden, has gone thro' the ages,  
And into winter changed our budding spring.  
One foe let loose, the foe of man and God,  
Has spread slow havoc wide and far among  
Our mortal race. One seed dropped in our soil  
Has covered this fair globe with bitter weeds.  
Yet good as well as ill was in all this ;  
And the great law came up, worthy of God,  
Deeper than other laws, upon whose strength  
The keystone of a comely universe  
Fixes itself, and brings the arch together,  
The law which seizes upon sin, and turns  
Evil to good,—far wider, higher good  
Than would have been ; and yet in doing so  
Stamps every sin with the eternal curse.

‘That silent law, that met him everywhere  
And thwarted every plan, was just, tho' stern,  
Was good, tho' fraught with sorrow ; and its course  
Was upward, amid all the desolation  
Which it was daily working, as in power

It forced itself along, a thing of dread,  
Visible only in its strange results.  
It had laid earth in ruins, filled the grave,  
Broken ten thousand hearts ; yet it alone  
Could build up earth again and calm its storms,  
Empty the grave and heal the broken heart.  
On it the new foundations of a fair  
And stable universe are to be laid,  
When love and righteousness shall take the throne,  
And with perfection crown all creaturehood,—  
Perfection higher far than at the first,  
And stedfast thro' the everlasting age,—  
An age which never sheds its leaves, nor finds  
Its hair grow grey, nor its bright eye turn dim.

‘ Thus did he read the evil and the good,  
And learned the meaning, understood the purpose,  
Which like a living force lay wrapt in each ;  
For each thing, framed by man or made by God,  
Has different use. The anchor swimmeth not,  
But holds the floating vessel ; the tall mast  
Standeth immoveable, and yet becomes  
The spring of stateliest speed ; the soil is dead,  
And yet the seed that would yield up the life  
Folded within its grain must there be sown ;  
The breakers grind the rocks to sand, and are  
Themselves controlled by the small sand they grind ;  
The fire consumes the incense flung on it,  
And yet in doing so draws out in sweetness  
The breath that only fire can disimprison.  
‘ Each well of earth (they said of old) contains,

Beneath it hid, a palace all of pearl,  
In which the spirit of the sweet spring dwells :  
So at the base of all the true and good  
That wells up here there is a living power,  
Perfusing and impregnating the waters,  
Sending them forth to a thrice needy world  
To quench all thirst and purify all stains.  
He had digged down into these palaces,  
To bring up to the light of day the life  
That lies deep hidden underneath the soil ;  
He had digged down, and failed. The god had fled,  
Or had become invisible. He could not  
Lay hold of him, to learn his secret, or  
Compel him to obey another's will.

‘On such things musing, sober wisdom came  
To him in his perplexity and fear.  
Daily the deeper meaning of all things  
Around him dawned. The voice within all these  
External forms became articulate,  
And spoke in power. He felt that he was but  
An atom of the universe, sent here  
To do another's will, and to fulfil  
Another's purpose, in whose vast designs  
There were no weaknesses and no mistakes.  
Bowing the head, he took a humble place,  
Unlearning his long folly, and retiring  
From the bold enterprise he undertook,  
The grand deliverance of humanity,  
The restitution of a broken world.  
He learned the helplessness of creaturehood,  
And yet its strength for evil and for ruin.

Man quenches life, but cannot life replace,  
Even in the insect which he treads upon.  
An infant's hand can in a moment fire  
A city, which ten thousand men of skill  
And might cannot rebuild. The power for evil  
Lodged in one human will surpasses far  
Its power for good. For now six thousand years  
Evil has fought with good, and good with ill ;  
But which has conquered in the varying strife,  
Upon whose issues hangs the eternal weal  
Of this vast universe, once made so good ?

‘ ‘Twas thus he learned his own true part and work  
(Meaner than once he thought, yet glorious still)  
In turning the slow axle of the world,  
Or lessening its evil and its sin.  
Though not a sun, he might be still a ray ;  
In solitary service, hour by hour,  
And in prevailing fellowship with Him  
Who at the fountain-head of being sits,  
And to the good, says Come, and lo, it cometh ;  
Who to the evil speaketh, Hence, depart ;  
Thus far shalt thou prevail, but not beyond ;  
He might in his own sphere exert a force  
And do a work which no one else could do,  
And which could nowhere else be done than in  
The spot where he was placed. God's work is done  
By each one doing his own part, though small,  
In his own place, by keeping patiently  
The orbit within which his motion lies :  
Who quits the orbit of his mission, fails.  
‘ God's sword belongeth to Himself alone ;

Man may not wield it, nor so much as try  
To draw it from the scabbard ; yet the day  
Cometh most surely, when it shall leap forth,  
And with its righteous edge do the strange work  
Which has been left undone for ages. Now  
It sleeps, or almost sleeps, save when in secret  
And in slow silence, like a stealthy foe,  
Moving along, it springs up suddenly,  
In one dread moment finishing its work.

Mute is just vengeance ; without sound she strikes  
The righteous blow and does her sacred work ;  
As when she smote the Cities of the Plain,  
And bid the sun shine down on Sodom's grave ;  
Or when she showed Jerusalem the hosts  
Of proud Assyria strewed like sand upon  
Her western slopes, without the gleam of spear  
Or sound of trumpet summoning to war.

‘Faith waiteth and is patient,—this he learned ;  
It looks to unseen wisdom ; leans upon  
An unseen will ; transports itself each day  
From the dark turbulence and chaos here  
Into a peaceful future ; makes no haste,  
Assured that progress and perfection are  
Too holy to be snatched at by rash man,  
Who, in his fond ambition to be God,  
And sit at once upon the throne of earth,  
Rejects the tardy processes of time.

Faith sees their weary slowness, sees no less  
The retrogression which so often tries  
Its constancy. It hears the voice, Be still,  
And it is still ; for, sure as sunrise, comes,

Though with slow march, the promise of the ages.  
But reason is impetuous, and scorns  
To wait for slow development and growth.  
Earth's fires must be replenished, that they may  
Burn faster and more fiercely ; ocean's tides,  
Stately alike in tempest and in calm,  
That from all ages have kept time, and marched  
By royal law in every clime of earth  
Backward and forward, must be hurried on ;  
The creeping wheels of a belated world  
Must in man's service be compelled to fly  
At quicker pace, by science smoothed and oiled.  
Ye planets, speed you, and ye lightning-bolts,  
Strike quicker blows, man frets at your delay ;  
Ye cataracts, precipitate your fall  
With swifter rush ; ye rivers, run, and stay not  
To dally with the willow drooping o'er you,  
Or with your grassy fringe in wanton play ;  
Ye winds, delay not ; ye fire-wingèd barques,  
Urge on your race ; and ye swift-rolling wheels  
That whirl along earth's iron pavements, fly  
With sevenfold speed, like royal messengers :  
Man is in haste, and ye his servants must  
Loiter no more ; the goal is nearly reached.  
He shall not surely die, but live, and be  
As gods, that know the evil and the good,  
Over both wielding high his sovereign sway.

‘Conscious of ill and pain, yet knowing not  
The source or cure, man walks the ruined earth,  
Each day revolving plans that shall build up  
Creation's shattered gates and levelled walls.

Each ruin is to him a hopeless riddle.  
Whence came it, and how shall it be repaired ?  
Who shall arrest the crumbling, or bring back  
The far-swept atoms to their native block ?  
Each fragment seems to represent a failure,  
The torso of a sculptor, whose right hand  
Has lost its cunning in the hour of need.  
Why does he find so many tangled threads,  
So many dislocated purposes,  
So many morns without an eve, and eves  
Without a morn or hope of rising sun,  
So many ladders, and yet none to climb them,—  
So many climbers waiting for a ladder,  
So many failures in the race of life,  
So many wasted immortalities,  
So many dire eclipses of the soul  
Under the sceptre of the Blessed One ?  
What is the root of wormwood that embitters  
All things below ? Or what the unquenched  
torch,  
That nightly seems to set the world on fire ?  
Is it some deep inevitable flaw  
In that which we call nature, or is it  
Blindness or feebleness in nature's Lord ?  
Or is it that all-penetrating poison,  
Which man calls evil, but which God calls sin ?  
Something whose hellish virulence eats in  
To the most central core of human joy,  
And dims the brilliance of its brightest gems,  
Something profoundly dark, which creaturehood  
Has summoned into being, but which only

He who is infinite can pluck away,  
And banish beyond chance of dread return ?

‘ Man asks, but cannot answer, or, in answering,  
Doubles the maze, makes the perplexity  
Yet more perplexed ; then fretfully reproaches  
The Framer of the fabric for endorsing  
Laws that seem equally to curse and bless.  
There is no key on earth which can unlock  
The council-house of heaven. The key of gold,  
Which opens wide each strong-barred gate below,  
Availeth not above. The golden axe,  
Which, they say, shatters even the iron door,  
Is powerless here. No bribe or threat of man  
Can draw the secrets out that everywhere  
Lie hid in that which he calls history  
And nature. Like the lyre of Egypt, they  
Speak or are silent as the sun of dawn  
Touches their cords or hides his magic beam.

‘ Oft has God spoken, but man closed his ear  
Against all oracle or speech divine.  
He has kept silence, and man heeded not,  
Nor felt the awe which such a stillness claims.  
Four centuries there were ere He, the WORD,  
Came down to speak to man with man’s own  
lips,  
Out of the fulness of a human heart,  
The undiscoverable thoughts of God,  
And show the love that love alone can tell,—  
Four solemn ages in which God kept silence.  
No word from prophet or from seer to man  
Dropt from His lips. The oracle was mute ;

The jewelled breastplate flashed not ; dream and vision  
Alike were gone ; and the great shrine was still.

‘God spoke not, that He might give fullest scope  
For man to speak and utter all his wisdom.

Then Plato reasoned, Socrates, and all  
The wise of Greece, poet and orator,  
Philosopher and men of noble soul.

Man spoke, and spoke with eloquence and power ;  
No rival near, no messenger of heaven,  
To abash his boldness or to seal his lips,  
Or drown his human voice with sounds divine.

‘But yet the world by wisdom knew not God.  
It wrestled but in vain, from age to age,  
With the perversities of human life,—  
The problems that defy all intellect  
And all philosophy, or old or new.

It dreamed, and tho’ the dream was beautiful,—  
Like Scipio’s, when the spheres sent forth their music,  
And sung his spirit into harmony,—  
It left the heart unfilled, the soul unblest,  
Unpurged the conscience, unsubdued the will.

‘Ilyssus bore the dreamer’s lays along  
On its clear blue ; Hymettus, with its thyme,  
Welcomed a honey sweeter than its own.  
Brilessus beckoned to its woody bowers  
The pensive strollers of the Academe ;  
And Lycabettus echoed back the voice  
Of eloquence that filled Athenian halls.  
The olive-shades were listeners to the words  
Of Attic thoughtfulness ; the sloping vines  
Of Parnes hung their clusters o’er the heads

Of these deep-meditative men, when one,  
And then another, and another still,  
Conversed of things divine, groping their way  
Through conscious darkness, throbbing thro' the soul  
And saddening the brow, to something fair  
That lay beyond it, and that looked like day ;  
Guessing at truth, and picking up, or here  
Or there, a few bright fragments, that but showed  
How much lay undiscovered, and how much  
Might one day be revealed to man, when, from  
A loftier Olympus than they knew,  
One should descend, to teach as never yet  
Philosopher or poet had them taught :  
With certainty the things of certainty  
Proclaiming, from no fabled oracle  
Of Delphi or Dodona ; uttering,  
Not the "I think" of Athens or of Egypt,  
But the "I know" of heaven ; saying to men,  
As the old father notes, not "I am custom,"  
Or "I am reason," but with majesty,  
"I am the truth ; all wisdom is in me."

‘ Fair are thy slopes, O classic Attica !  
Yet in these palmy days of ancient thought  
And earnest questioning, they never heard  
The key-note of divine philosophy,  
That "God is light ;"—the music of the heart,  
Passing all other music, "God is love."  
One of themselves, a prophet of their own,  
He of Eleusis, old Euphorion's son,  
Who fought at Marathon and sung at Athens,  
Has spoken words of gravest thoughtfulness,

Painting in stateliest majesty of verse  
The firmament of God, the rushing winds,  
The river-springs, old ocean's countless smile,  
Our mother earth, the sun's all-seeing eye,  
And the One God, invisible, supreme ;  
Describing in his measured roll of song  
The rock-chained Titan on the sea-swept cliff  
Of barren Caucasus, condemned and lone,—  
The vulture ever gnawing at his heart,  
Till the great gulf of yawning earth receive him,  
And he descends into the dread abyss,  
With the strange prophecy proclaimed, that there  
He must remain, until from heaven some god  
Go down, and, entering Hades in his stead,  
Shall bear his penalty and bring him up  
From the dread Tartarus, to which his crime  
Of God-defiance and self-will had doomed him,—  
The crime of stealing light from heaven against  
The will of Him who made him what he was,  
And gave him earth for his inheritance.  
Yet but a gleam was this of the high truth  
That the sick conscience of humanity  
Had long been groping for, to heal its wounds,—  
A guess at the great coming fact, on which  
The new foundations of the universe  
Were to be laid,—God manifest in flesh,  
The Just One for the unjust suffering doom ;—  
A gleam, a guess, which penetrated not  
The long, lone darkness which o'erhung that land  
Of wonder and of loveliness, where once,  
Amid the clusters of its marble shrines,

Man's sorrowing search for something to fill up  
The blank within his soul, found resting-place  
In the cold worship of the unknown God.  
There was a fire upon the altar there  
Of Pallas, ever burning up to heaven ;  
But no one knew its meaning. There was blood  
Of consecrated victims,—sprinkled blood,  
And outpoured wine, and holy festival ;  
But no one guessed their import, for the light  
Was but a spark, which glimmered and was gone.

‘ What could not Greece have done, if intellect,  
Keen as the sword of Pericles, and bright  
As the broad evening-star that sets upon  
The sea of Salamis, when all the air  
Is calm as heaven, could search the unknown ether,  
And bring from its still depths the long-sought gems  
Of everlasting light to man below ?  
Or dive into the dread eternal deep,  
To bring up pearls which would enrich for ever  
The human spirit’s deepest poverty ?

‘ But Greece has failed ; her truest and her best  
Have owned the failure. He who drank the hemlock,  
The man of progress, far beyond his age,  
Philosophy’s first martyr and her last,  
Sighed as he sat upon the sterile edge  
Of the great sea of knowledge, and looked o’er  
Its mist-bewildered face, so tempting-fair,  
Without a barque or skiff to navigate  
Its glorious regions, or explore its isles,  
Or fetch its golden fleece from realms afar.  
“ All that I know is that I nothing know : ”

This the confession of the noblest spirit  
That, in these four mysterious centuries,  
These ages of God's silence and man's speech,  
Searched all the depths and heights of finite knowledge,  
And with calm modesty and meekness owned  
The failure of a lifetime's solemn search !

‘Era of human speech and thought, all song  
And eloquence and overflow of mind,  
How fair thy light, and yet how pale its ray !  
Strewed with the sparks of many a noble torch  
Or fire, that seemed as if it fain would burn,  
But could not for the still and stagnant air ;  
Gleams of a sun that would have shone, but could not ;  
Meteors that lighted up no earthly path,  
Nor led one spirit to the spirit's home ;  
Nor bid the day-spring rise upon our race,  
Nor gave one glimpse of resurrection-hope.

‘Era of mighty minds, which uncontrolled  
Roamed over wisdom's widest fields, yet plucked  
No flowers from islands of the blest, no balm  
Of sweet and subtle medicine for the soul ;  
Which breathed the scent of the far-wandering winds,  
Whose breath is health, and yet found health in none.

‘Noon of the olden earth,—if such we may  
Call your pale splendour, hardly worth the name  
Of twilight,—vainly didst thou struggle with  
The heavy gloom of time, evanishing,  
And leaving man unblessed and undelivered.  
Ah, surely in your heavens the light of life  
Was not,—the sure and the unchanging life  
That lightens man with its all-healing rays,

And shineth on unto the perfect day !  
Love was not in your temples ; and your gods  
Were gods of vengeance, despots of the sky.  
We look to you in vain for charity,—  
The charity that suffers long, and bids  
Defiance to all hatred or revenge,—  
The charity that gives all heaven to man,  
And grudgeth not the gift beyond all price.  
Your gods had other things to do than love ;  
They had to feast, to quarrel, and to hate.  
Your Jove was but the demon of the air,  
Shedding on earth malignant influence,  
And watching to destroy. You taught no love,  
Nor could have taught it : he who would impart  
Love's happy lessons must himself be love,—  
Lesson and type and teacher all in one.

‘ The old Orient ruled the body, Greece the mind,  
And Rome the will. But were the chains of sin  
Thus broken, or the spirit lifted up  
To breathe the freer and diviner air  
Of everlasting truth and holiness ?  
Great in the sword, in thought, in wit and song,  
Did man emerge from their victorious rule  
Nobler in being, higher, and more godlike ?  
Or was this globe transformed to fruitfulness  
And universal beauty by their touch ?

‘ Thus musing on the failures of the past,  
And made at length to feel how impotent  
His wisdom and his zeal against the powers,  
Invisible and visible, of ill,  
That made this earth a chaos, he begins

To think of light above his own ; of truth  
Which in the end, by its own vital force,  
Must prove omnipotent in conquering ill ;  
Of an eternal purpose working out,  
By slow but certain processes below,  
A better, brighter history for earth,  
In which himself shall have a part, tho' not  
The proud pre-eminence that once he hoped.

‘ The once fond dreamer now has found his place,  
And, like each part of what we nature call,  
Does his own work, and fills up life with that  
For which it had been given him, tho’ at first  
In his wild waywardness he saw it not.  
‘ Tis a true life that now he lives ; a life  
That tells upon the world, as tells the wind  
Invisibly upon the swelling sail ;  
As tells the oar upon the boat’s sure progress.  
Brought into conflict with a power of ill  
Beyond his strength to cope with, he falls back  
Upon that power which wields the wind and wave,  
That rouses, like a lion from its lair,  
The dormant hurricane, then says, “ Be still,”  
Or bids the strong cliff countercheck its rage.

‘ Within the fortress of Almighty strength  
He hides himself when tempests are too strong ;  
Or goeth forth in weakness, yet in trust,  
To wield that strength against the mighty foe.  
“ They say that prayer is vain,” so wrote he once ;  
“ Or at the best a needful utterance  
Of pleasant feeling or of pent-up grief ;

The solemn music of the inner man  
When gazing on a greater than himself.  
Not so to me did it appear : I saw  
That if there be a God there must be prayer ;  
The invisible conversing with the seen,  
The seen with the invisible ; the child  
Clasping the parent's hand, and looking up  
For succour and for fellowship. I saw  
In prayer the limits of my narrow being,  
The line where finite touches infinite,  
And where the seen looks out on the unseen ;  
The point where God meets man and man meets God  
In palpable fellowship, one loving heart  
Throbbing upon another like its own ;  
The point where strength meets weakness, weakness  
strength ;  
Where man receiveth, and God giveth all  
That man can ask or think ; that wondrous shrine  
Of true oracular question and response.  
It did not seem to me incredible  
That the same God who gave me this vast soul  
Should speak with me, and suffer me to speak  
With Him, as friend with friend ; rather would it  
Have seemed incredible that He who made me  
Should bar all intercourse, and mock the soul  
That He had made, with everlasting silence,—  
Answering no question, sitting far apart,  
Like the chill statue of some marble god,  
Dumb as the dead, and heedless of the cries  
That His own creatures raise. Rather would I  
Worship the vocal sea, or fruitful sun,

Or speaking star, that, with its love-bright eye,  
Has whispered gladness these six thousand years  
To troubled man, than such a god as this,  
Who made me, yet who spurns me from His presence ;  
Who knows my sorrows, but refuses still  
To let me pour them out into His bosom ;  
Who hears my cries as tho' He heard them not ;  
My woes unpitied and unrecognised,  
Myself a wandering atom, made in sport,  
To sport with, not to bless,—He all the while  
Sitting in self-enjoyment or repose,  
Not answering, but mocking ; at the best,  
Like rock that sendeth back in resonant scorn  
The useless echo, dying in mid-air.”

‘ He lived to bless me ; and not me alone,  
But others. Trained for special work on earth  
By Him who needed such an instrument,  
For a brief season he fulfilled his day ;  
He did his work, and laid himself to rest  
Upon the bosom of his earthly sire,  
Departing with the golden cloud, that melts  
From the still blue as we are gazing on it,  
And wondering, as we gaze, how such a glory  
Should ever cease to be, or, having ceased,  
Should ever re-appear and shine anew  
With its old glory in a gentler sky.

‘ Each deathbed is a mystery and a fear,  
Even when the sting is gone. And when I think  
Of earth’s unnumbered deathbeds, which each day  
Draw the disconsolate eyes of loving friends

To watch the couch of pain and weariness,  
I say, What mean these rendings of the heart ?  
And how shall I unwind my tangled steps  
From the dark labyrinth of human grief,  
And brightly rise into that realm of life  
Where what we love shall never pine and die ?

‘ So did I reason when my child of love,  
My boy of sorrow and of hope, lay down  
In manhood’s prime to sleep the blessed sleep.  
I sat beside him in his troubled hours  
Of long, long pain. Dear hours of watchfulness  
To me, in that dim chamber where he tossed  
From night to night, until the angel came  
That bore him hence. Peace like a hidden spring  
Welled up within him, tho’ the flesh was weak ;  
The cross was lighting up the vale of death  
With its all-stedfast radiance. Joy was there.  
The piercing nails had gone thro’ other hands,  
And his had not a scar. The rending thorns  
Had torn another’s brow, and he was free.  
The angry spear had in another’s side  
Sheathed its sharp point, and he unwounded lay.  
He tossed and moaned ; then looking up and up,  
As if he saw into the far unseen,  
Sighed to be free. Once and again I heard  
His *nunc dimittis* breathed from pale, parched lips.  
Oh, my chained eagle ! when wilt thou take wing ?  
I said, tho’ loth to part. At length there came  
The messenger of life to bid him go.  
He went from earth ; could I but wish him joy ?  
I closed his eyes and smoothed his silken hair,

Then kissed his forehead, laid my lips on his,  
With the close pressure of heart-breaking love.  
It was a bridal kiss,—just such an one  
A mother gives her darling when about  
To leave the dwelling of her childhood for  
An untried home, where love will sweeten all.  
A few sore struggles brought deliverance,  
And then the sweet long calm : the storm was done ;  
'Twas but the rattle of the falling links ;  
The chain was broken, and the spirit free.  
He did not weep ; the dying never weep,  
The tread of coming death dries up the fount ;  
He did not weep, 'twas I that shed the tears.

' Farewell ! I follow soon ; then we shall meet  
Where the full fellowship of heart with heart  
Shall never sunder as they sunder here,—  
Shall never lose their freshness and their joy.

' How poor his death has left me, I must not  
Essay to tell ; how dark my dwelling now,  
Since the sad hour when its last light went out,  
None save myself can know. Few understand  
Deep sorrow ; fewer care to be beside it ;  
For the world loves not sackcloth, hides its eyes  
From dust and ashes, fears the name of death,  
Shuns the mute mourner in his day of tears,  
Thrusts away all that mars its festive mirth,  
Or mocks the music of its reckless song.

' Thus sorrow struck me with its two-edged sword,  
And life was rent asunder ; one-half here,  
And one above, with those who have gone up

To wait for me till we shall meet on high.  
The cloud is o'er me, and within I feel  
The daily bleeding of a hidden wound,  
That neither time nor skill avail to stanch.  
Often I go to their last place of rest  
Beneath the turf ; last place of earthly rest  
Till life shall come, and all my buried gems  
Be plucked from the old spoiler's robber-grasp.  
I walk amid the tombstones, touching each  
With this old staff, as one who drops a line  
Into some ancient well, and listens hard  
To learn how deep it is. For graves are deep ;  
Deeper than eyes have seen ; each one of them  
Linked with the depths and heights of realms unknown.  
And as we look at them, or hear the voice  
Of the low wind, that, as it passes o'er,  
Makes melancholy music, we go in  
Thro' the low gates into the wide expanse  
Of light that lies beyond, into whose joy  
Our loved have entered, beckoning us to come.

‘ We love to hide our grief, or fear to show it,  
As if too sacred for the common eye ;  
Yet not the less we cherish it ; perhaps  
To give it out to God in prayer, to man  
In song, and to ourselves in silent thought.  
Each dwelling has its cloud, without, within ;  
Earth's proudest cities know what sorrow is.  
And yet it speaks not in the multitude  
Of voices that we hear ; we walk the streets,  
Yet see it not ; we pass its very door,  
Yet hear it not. Deep, deep down hides the grief

That is the truest ; we must seek for it  
If we would find it and bind up its wounds.  
Joy puts the trumpet to its lips, and makes  
The city ring with shout and song and mirth.

‘ But ’twill not now be long. The storms are done,  
And the last breaking wave has spent itself.  
The winds are dying into peace, and morn  
Smiles down upon me from the hills of home.  
Life’s weather-broken barque has safely reached  
The long-sought bay ; the worn-out keel at length  
Grazes the strand. I leap to land, and find  
Myself at last upon the stormless shore.’

## BOOK VIII.

---

‘FROM this calm desert let me date these lines’  
(So writes a wanderer whom we knew in youth,  
Who after uneventful years lay down  
To rest beneath Geneva’s sycamores).

‘The sands are all about me ; the nude rocks  
With checkered peaks are watching for the dawn,  
Whose tide of radiance now begins to flow,  
After the ebb of night, and to steal up  
With sweet obtrusion on the shaded air.

‘I am alone ; and for a time at least  
I love to be so. Cares are for the crowd,  
And here I part with them. Not that I turn  
My back upon the race, as if to leave  
All love behind me ; and yet would I seek  
A time of breathing and a place of rest,  
To fit me for the after-work of life,  
The service, or the trial, or the toil ;  
And here, in this unutterable calm,  
I find the freshening which my spirit needs.

‘I watch in silence every change, and mark  
Yon burst of radiance from the unrisen sun,  
That like a billow breaks against the morn ;  
Then springing upwards in divided wreaths,

Scatters its spray of beauty o'er the hills,  
Braiding with its unearthly gold the clouds  
That hang like tresses on the brow of dawn.  
All leisurely the day is coming up,  
Like one assured of welcome ; o'er the sands  
The languid under-breeze is stealing by,  
Scarce ruffling one of these acacia leaves.  
O calm without a name, so sweet, so deep !  
O wondrous air, so sparkling, so serene !

‘ The skies are bluest when they bend above  
The blue wide ocean ; they are purest when  
They stretch across a wilderness like this,  
Where man is not, and where no city-smoke  
Stifles the noon, and dulls its trembling blue.  
Man is polluting all the streams of earth :  
Its very seas send shoreward with a sigh  
The murky wave, no longer hyaline.  
A veil, but not of night, nor swift eclipse,  
Bedims the sun. Beauty and odour flee  
The pale-faced flowers. With boughs of tarnished green  
The forests droop. The showers have lost their freshness,  
The snow its maiden splendour, and the breeze,  
Or from the rising or the sinking sun,  
Comes, with its tainted breath, to blanch the cheek  
And take the blossom from youth’s budding spring.

‘ But here, in this untainted wilderness,  
The far-spread poison ceases ; not a trace  
Of living influence, for good or ill,  
To tell of him whose hand, however skilful,  
Ne’er touches but it mars, or leaves the trail  
As of a serpent on the soil it tills !

‘ Land of lone silence, over which there breaks  
No city-murmur in the busy morn,  
When millions rise to labour; whose still nights  
(So still that one might hear the moonbeams fall,  
Or the soft dew alight, hour after hour,  
Upon the acacia leaves or rittem bloom)  
No sighing sick-bed and no tears disturb;  
Where neither death nor life is seen around;  
Where no voice meets you with its “ Hush, be still,  
For death is on that couch, within these curtains :  
Tread softly lest you should disturb the dead.”  
Land of strange muteness, where the camel’s hoof  
Or foot of the half-sandalled Bedawi  
Raises no echo; where the bleat of flocks,  
Or shepherd’s call, or song of sleepless streams,  
Is all unheard! How I stand here and gaze  
In silence, like your own, upon these wastes,  
As if afraid to breathe; then looking up  
Into your lucid heavens, as if to scale  
The summit of that bright miraculous arch,  
Whose keystone is the star that never sets,  
Whose base the sweep of these unending sands.

‘ This is Arabia! That the mount of God,  
Whose granite peaks, bathed in descending flame,  
Once shook as God came down, and the loud blast  
Of trumpets filled the unaccustomed air.  
Here would I sit beneath the spiky boughs  
Of this acacia, and gaze all around.  
The tread of millions once amid these rocks  
Was heard; but that has long since passed away.  
A liberated nation sung its songs,

Reared its new altar here, and daily drenched  
These dead dry sands with sacrificial blood.  
But every stain of blood or trace of ashes  
Has vanished in the wind and rain of ages.  
A liberated nation sung its songs  
Amid these valleys, but the strain has died.  
A noble priesthood waved its censers here,  
Fair with fresh gold, and glistening with new gems,  
Sending from these into the virgin air  
A fragrance never known on earth before,  
Sweetness as perfect as it was divine.

‘ And here the pillared glory, dwelling-place,  
Chariot, and throne of Him who fills the heavens,  
Blazed in its cloudy brightness, day and night ;  
A sun, a shield, a keeper, and a guide !  
It, too, is gone, and the sun smites the sand,  
Without a cloud between : the wilderness  
Is poorer than before ; for He who pitched  
For forty years His tent above its wastes  
Has left it, to return no more until  
He comes as new-Creator of the earth.  
Then shall this desert blossom as the rose ;  
Its rocks shall gush with living springs and streams ;  
The cedar and the myrtle and the olive  
Shall cover its grey sands ; like Eden then,  
Earth’s long-lost garden, shall it all become,  
And these fierce hungry rocks, like skeletons  
Of the dead mountains of a former world,  
That rise on every side, shall clothe themselves  
With verdure such as Sharon knoweth not,  
Nor Lebanon in greenest springs hath seen.

‘Here the new river rushed from the deep cleft  
Of the parched flint to quench a nation’s thirst,  
Went thro’ the desert with the chosen race,  
Then disappeared, in silent mystery,  
To the deep source from which it first welled out,  
Its happy embassy of love fulfilled ;  
As if the angel of the waters had  
Beckoned it forth, then beckoned it away.

‘Here, too, the unknown manna daily rained  
Celestial food, angelic sustenance ;  
And man on earth did eat the bread of heaven ;  
A better than the best of earthly food,  
And pledge of food more true and more divine,  
The bread of God, the everlasting bread  
Which whoso eateth hungers never more ;  
Bread for the famine of a hungry world,  
The soul’s true provender, which giveth life  
Above all human life to them who eat.  
Be that bread ever mine ; and let all else  
Pass by untasted ; nothing else can fill ;  
No more I need ; no less can satisfy.

‘This way the millions marched, and here they  
rested,—

The host of the oppressed, set free, and yet  
Unused to battle, with the broken links  
Of Egypt’s fetters on their weary limbs.  
Here the Phoenician Amalek swept down  
For spoil and havoc. On yon hill, that like  
A sentinel looks down upon this plain,  
The Hebrew leader sat with lifted rod,  
Till, like the sand before the hurricane,

The desert foe was scattered to the night,  
And, like the Egyptian chariots, seen no more.

‘Here stood the altar, where the blood of peace  
Was shed and sprinkled ; meeting-place between  
The nation and its God, where heaven and earth  
Embraced each other ; the long-wandered son  
And the still loving Father reconciled,  
Each in the other’s arms fast locked together,  
Only the blood between, at that strange spot  
Of the eternal peacemaking, where death  
Gives place to life, and love gets unchecked vent  
To all its yearnings o’er the sons of men.  
O tide of love, flow in and on, till I  
Am covered with thy gladness ! Thee I need  
To bear me thro’ the conflict. Righteous love,  
Fill this unrighteous soul ; and let thy joy  
Abide with me, as at the altar I  
In peace stand looking on the face of God.

‘Here was the feast of love, where God and man  
Sat down together, of one common loaf  
Eating, and of one cup, with wine of heaven  
Filled day by day, partaking in their joy.  
The crowds of earth far off : no Egypt now  
To break the silence of these lonely sands,  
Or mar the intercourse, or draw the heart  
Of man from God by its attractive grace.—  
O earth, how strong ! O human face, how fair !  
How treacherous the beauty of all things  
Beneath the light of this soft-smiling sun !  
O comeliness of creaturehood, what power  
Is in thee to bewilder ! Voices sweet

Of man and woman, how ye win the ear,  
 And close it against melody divine !  
 I feel that I must be alone, ere I  
 Be not alone ; and it is here I find  
 The one companionship that satisfies ;  
 It is the crowd that makes the solitude ;  
 This desert is not loneliness to me.

‘Strange legends, too, of later days, affix  
 Their marvels to each wizard cliff around.  
 Yon crimson peak, and yon tall yellow spire ;  
 And that green belt that girds the precipice,  
 And these lone palms of moonlight, that drink up  
 The scanty moisture of this burning soil ;  
 This solitary graveyard with its stones,  
 Unhewn and interfringed with desert-broom,  
 Whose history no wanderer can tell ;  
 That dried-up well, to which the traveller comes  
 In vain for water to his withered lips ;  
 That pale-faced rock, that like a minaret  
 Lifts itself, but on which or day or night  
 No watcher sits and no muezzin calls,—  
 All have their names and stories. Well they seem  
 Fitted for fable, so magnificent  
 And so unearthly do they show themselves  
 In starlight or in sunshine. Not the like  
 Doth earth contain of haggard majesty.

‘That old fantastic ruin is the place  
 Of buried gold ; and underneath that rock  
 Are gardens which would make a Paradise  
 (So tells the Bedawi the solemn tale

His fathers, and his father's fathers told).  
On yon weird boulder strange lights have been seen  
By wanderers, that point to hidden gems.  
That cairn contains the bones of one who left  
A name for blood behind him, and on it  
Each Arab, as he passes, pours his curse.  
That other heap retains a gentler name,  
To which with softer voice he says, *Lie still.*

‘They say that to yon peak, that shooteth up  
Like rugged splinter of a giant’s lance,  
And sparkles in the blue of awful night  
As if some star had lighted on its top,  
Two maidens climbed, each with a broken heart,  
And, in the frenzy of love’s dark despair,  
Twining their raven tresses into one  
Indissoluble braid, with close-linked arms  
Flung themselves down that hideous pinnacle,  
Inviting all the vultures of the rocks  
To come and feed upon their quivering limbs.

‘Close by yon tiny spring, that wanders out  
From the bare slope, and like an angel smiles  
In the brown desert, rises sharp and high  
A ponderous wedge of everlasting rock,  
Barring all access once. A sword, men say,  
(Men to whom fable is bright history,  
And who have clothed their rocks with glowing dreams),  
A swift miraculous sword clave it in twain,  
And formed a gateway never to be closed,  
Thro’ which the wanderer might pass in and drink  
Of the clear water, as it shines and smiles ;  
A thing of life in this lone world of death.

Fair fountain, clearer than Bandusian spring,  
Tho' rocks be all thy shelter, and the sand  
Thy only margin ! Yet a clearer fount  
I know, from deeper rocks than these upwelling,  
To cheer the desert with its crystal flow.

‘They point to two strange cells, the one hard by  
The other, where still lie in ghastliness  
The bones of two who sought to spend their lives  
In prayer. A chain, reaching from cell to cell,  
Linked them, and when the one lay down to rest,  
The hard chain drew the other up to pray.  
Thus day and night they toiled thro’ a dark life,  
Amid the echoes of these solitudes ;  
As if to pray were better than to do ;  
As if to groan were better than to love ;  
As if the God, upon whose altar day  
By day they laid their never-ending cries,  
Were some stern Jupiter, who loved them not,  
And would not answer them nor heed their tears ;  
Or some gaunt desert-Moloch, whose delight  
Was but to feed on human agony,  
And drink the dismal music of despair.

‘Enough of legends, be they false or true ;  
Turn to the real, the present, and the fair.  
See this lone valley, with its pillared palms,  
Each a tall minaret of waving green,  
With shrub and underwood thick intertwined,  
Untrimmed and shaggy ; tamarisk and thorn ;  
The sacred seyal, clothed with pilgrim rags ;  
The pliant rittem, with its hidden flowers ;  
A gay, sweet garden, hedged with horrid cliffs.

Peaks of all shapes and heights are here ; some dark,  
Like wing of desert-raven, and some bright,  
Like knightly helmet with its vizor down,  
Flashing afar the sheen of burnished steel  
Midway in heaven to the responsive sun.

‘Here may I sit, in the palm-shaded grove,  
So unlike all the wilderness beside,  
And dreaming, listen to the nightingale,  
Safe from the sandstorm or the blinding heat,  
Yet still enjoying in the forest shade  
The deep, delicious sunshine, as it quivers  
Along these sands or round these grim old cliffs,  
Or, hovering gently like a weary bird,  
Sinks silently to rest amid the palms.

‘Here may I sit and think of home again,  
My western home, far greener than this grove,  
With its soft sward and mountain rills, that know  
No dearth nor drought, still flowing in their joy,  
Silver and gold and crystal all in one ;  
Tho’ without vine or palm or sycamore,  
Or olive with its sombre green ; and tho’  
Without a nightingale to cheer the dark,  
Or chant its gladness to the listening stars.  
These heavens are clear, and the swift sun comes up,  
With scarce a twilight, like a ball of fire,  
Then goeth down with like unshaded blaze.  
Yes ; they are clear,—too clear for those whose eyes  
Have gazed on the magnificence of cloud  
That fills the concave of our northern skies,  
The wondrous Oberland above our heads.  
Bluer, perhaps, than ours, but shallower far

These desert heavens ; how low, each brilliant night,  
Upon the horizon rests the constant star  
Of midnight,—star of the unsetting pole !

‘ Nor books are here, nor man ; yet man and books,  
With all that made them dear of love or truth,  
I can recall ; the thoughts of other days,  
My own or those of others, pass before me,  
Recorded in this volume, which I bear  
About with me in journeyings, to link  
My studious days with those of idleness.

“ ‘They say the cypress tree’ (so read I here  
The thoughts of former hours), ‘if once ’tis cut,  
Puts forth no green again. They say the palm  
Grows best when loaded. Be my symbol, then,  
The palm and not the cypress. I would prize  
The daily discipline that works its way  
Into the secret chambers of the soul,  
To purify my being and my life.  
O solemn fast-days of the Church of God,  
When the soul rises above earth, and seeks  
A purer sunshine than this world can give,  
Let me enjoy you while the world feasts on  
In song and laughter, heedless of its sin.

“ ‘Four thorns, ’tis said, are needful to make up  
A good man’s life, a true man’s character,—  
In front, behind, and one on either side.  
Which of the wise or great has been without them ?  
Pressure and pain and toil consolidate  
The feeble will, and root the unrooted soul.’ ”

“ ‘Deep sorrow is God’s loving messenger,  
Tho’ clothed in sackcloth, with a wreath of thorns

Round his pale brow, and his despatches filled  
With evil tidings ; for he loves and loves not :  
He knocketh calmly at the gate, and hands  
His missive in, but speaketh not a word.  
How terrible his silence, would we say !  
Oh, would that he would speak, and let us know  
From the beginning what his message bears  
Of worst or best, without the slow suspense  
That tears up life and wastes the weary frame.

“ The men of old, the wise in thought and speech,  
Who love to knit in one the fair and true,  
Tell that the myrtle carried in the hand  
Turneth the traveller’s weakness into strength :  
I need the myrtle, for my strength is small,—  
The tree which giveth life to all who touch.”

“ Sound tests the vessel and reveals the flaw.  
So does our speech reveal us, as said well  
The orator of Athens ; and a greater  
Searches the fool with the unwelcome test,  
And bids us know him by his empty words.  
The idle speech, the idle silence too,  
Must both one day be reckoned for by us :  
I know not which containeth most of ill.”

“ It is the little things of daily life  
That test us and that tell us what we are,  
Unfolding both to others and ourselves  
The deepest secrets of the inner man.  
If thou wouldst know thyself, take up and read  
The little things of life, and thou shalt find  
In them the true expression of the man.  
The sap ascends, invisible and silent ;

Light does its miracles without a voice ;  
The forest putteth forth its thousand buds  
By stealth, and day without a trumpet-note  
Supplants the night ; the air leans down  
On the subjacent earth, and yet its fields  
Feel not the pressure, nor resent the load.  
So be our life,—a silent energy,  
An unseen potency of useful love.  
Be what thou seem'st, and let that ever be  
The best and truest ; wrong not by pretence.  
Earth's deadliest aconite, I know, is plucked  
From out its greenest fields ; beware lest thou,  
With a fair-spoken lip of eloquence,  
Or quiet sweetness, be the deadly bane.

““ As in the God-appointed sacrifice,  
Laid upon Israel's altars long ago,  
No honey, sweetest of all earthly sweets,  
Was to be mingled ; as the bitter herb  
Gave zest to Israel's feast ; so with our life,  
The life of strangers ; 'tis the bitter now,  
The sweet hereafter ; tribulation here,  
And then the exceeding weight of joy for ever.

““ In this low world of shadows and of death,  
This earth, I mean, beneath yon silent sun,  
Where evil doeth battle with the good,  
And fills our air with strife's bewildering gloom,  
Sorrow itself becomes our brightest torch,  
As if impregnated with light from heaven.—  
Torch of the desert, what do I not owe  
To thee and to thy calm unearthly light !  
Torch of the midnight, bright when all is dark,

Fling out thy radiance on this pilgrim band ;  
Illumine these our perilous rough paths,  
Until the waste is traversed, and the day  
Breaks in its splendour o'er the eternal plains,  
Thro' which the living streams in gladness flow."

“I rest, yet rise ; I toil, yet am refreshed ;  
I may not tarry till my work is done,  
I would go forth to labour while 'tis day,  
And then withdraw into myself, like flowers  
At sunset, ready for the joyous dawn.  
Rather would I be like the fabled bird  
That sleeps on wing ; or like the earnest flowers,  
Sleepless exhaling fragrance all around !  
Be one or many, yet be all thyself ;  
True to thy being, give that being out,  
And let it tell upon the world around.  
As the split sunbeam spreads its sevenfold glow,  
So spread out all thyself in happy light  
Upon the clouds, which else would all be gloom.”

‘But I must rise and go ; elsewhere, amid  
Fresher and greener beauty, to sit down  
And tell you more of what this earth contains ;  
For earth is fair, tho' once we know 'twas fairer,  
And will be fairer still in days to come.

‘I am in Egypt,—that is her high sun,  
These her gaunt palms, and this her brimming Nile!  
Here, resting by this old imperial stream,  
This majesty and pride of waters, where  
Antiquity has cast her deepest shadow,—

Where, like a lion from his lair, it looks  
Out from each obelisk and pyramid,  
I sit and muse, strewing without an aim  
Upon the dusky tremor of its wave,  
That like a marble pavement spreadeth out,  
The light acacia leaves that hang around,  
And mark how quietly they pass away,  
Without a whirl or eddy, down the sunshine.

‘ Egypt, thy watch-towers are the Pyramids,  
That battle with the spirit of the waste ;  
Thy bulwarks, the immeasurable sands  
That stretch on either side ; thy treasure-house  
Of wealth, the wondrous river, which, unfed  
By tributary waters, year by year  
Flushes thy sandy wastes with fruitful soil.  
O Rhone and Danube, rivers of high name,  
Tiber and Tigris, venerable streams,  
Whose banks are histories of kings and realms,  
What are ye all beside this mighty flood ?  
Like palm beside the sycamore, or like  
The cedar in some olive-grove, this stream  
Flows, from each river of the earth apart,  
Without its fellow of the east or west,  
The nurse and mother of old Memphis still.—  
Sea of the desert, what a shore is thine !  
Cities and palaces and giant fanes ;  
Pillar and obelisk and architrave ;  
With rock-hewn chambers, whose well-sculptured walls  
Tell the great stories of old Mizraim’s youth,  
Each in itself a temple or a palace !  
Still on thou movest in thy river-march,

Unchanged amid the changes of thy kings,—  
Thyself a king more kingly than they all,  
Thy dynasty but one from first to last.  
Still from the Nubian snows thou comest down,  
As each bright summer bids thee overflow,  
To do thine ancient work, and sternly urge  
Thy annual battle with the sterile sand ;  
Still driving back the desert on each side,  
And, in thy stately progress to the sea,  
Quicken the dead and barren soil to life,  
Till the grey desert smiles, and the lean dust  
Wakes into waving corn and blushing flowers.

‘ Among the lemon-groves of Jaffa now,  
Beneath her autumn palms, whose dropping clusters  
Glow in the fiery noon, all bronze and gold,  
I wander, drinking in the fragrance deep,  
And looking out upon the fitful sea  
Of old Philistia gleaming in the west.  
Oldest of cities, linked with sacred truth  
And classic fable from thy youngest dawn ;  
By name *the beautiful*, surpassing fair,  
As seen by mariner who steers his course  
From the far Occident, where summer’s sun  
Goes down in the long reach of green and gold,  
Flinging the spent shafts of his dying light  
Full on thy face ! Nor less I call thee fair  
When wandering ’neath thy shady orange-boughs,  
That scent the still noon-air ; or ’neath thy palms,  
That wave in beauty to the clear March noon,  
And shake their foliage o’er thy spray-swept beach.

Oldest of cities ! Sidon of the north,  
And Kirjath Arba of the rocky south,  
And Egypt's Zoan cannot equal thee.  
Andromadè and Perseus, if the lay  
Of classic story speak the truth, were here ;  
Monarchs of Palestine, and kings of Tyre,  
And the brave Maccabee have all been here ;  
And Cestius with his Roman plunderers ;  
And Saladin and Baldwin, and the host  
Of fierce crusaders from the British north,  
Once shook their swords above thee, and thy blood  
Flowed down like water to thine ancient sea.  
First city where the European wave  
Of superstitious battle broke in rage  
Over those surf-washed rocks that guard thy haven.  
Last city whence the dark crusading tide  
Ebb'd back in broken sullenness and gloom,  
Leaving thy bay as placid as before.  
City of terror ! where the rod of God  
Pursued the flying prophet, and with storm  
Brought back the unwilling messenger of ill.  
City of gladness ! where apostles' hands  
Wrought miracles of love, and dried up tears,  
And with a word unlocked the gate of death.

‘Scenes such as these I would revisit still,  
Rebuilding wall and fort and colonnade,  
Repeopling all this emptiness and ruin ;  
And, mingling with the men of other days,  
Would share their thoughts and deeds. But chiefly thee,  
Holiest of cities,—now the most defiled,—  
Where stood the temple of the Only Wise,

Where the one altar sent its smoke to heaven,  
Witness and symbol of the Coming One,  
Whose death without the gate hath won the life  
For us which only that one death could win.  
Thee would I look upon as once thou wast,  
When all thy gates were song, thy walls were strength,  
And all thy stones were peace ; where melody,  
The like of which has not been heard since then,  
Rose up from voice and harp and trumpet clear,  
Speaking the praises of the mighty King.  
Thee would I traverse in that hour of hours,  
When He who took my cross went forth in shame  
To bear my guilt, and, in most sweet exchange,  
To give me all! His heavenly innocence,—  
My raiment and my beauty and my peace !

‘Am I not there ? Is not that city mine ?  
And am I not a unit in that crowd ?  
Is not my voice amid that shower of sounds  
That fills the Roman hall ? And do I not  
Behold the Man ? And do I not go forth  
To gaze upon the Altar and the Lamb ?  
Beyond the marble wall I see the cross,  
And know its meaning ; for that cross is mine ;  
Mine is the crown of thorns ; and thro’ my hands  
And feet the nails are driven ; it is my side  
That the spear pierces,—I have died with Him.  
All that is mine He takes, and gives me His.  
I get another’s wealth, another’s name :  
All that that wealth can give I get, and all  
That that name covers is now reckoned mine ;—  
His good supplants my ill, His death my death ;

He takes my darkness, gives me all His light.  
The imperfect and the perfect thus exchanged,  
The bond is cancelled, and the debtor freed.

‘ Back to the burning East (so dreamers speak),  
Back to the burning East, whose skies are love,  
And stars are splendour, and the sun all flame ;  
Where night by night, without a veil to hide  
Her beauty, in deep fondness bends o’er earth  
The ever-filling, ever-emptying moon.  
Yet not for splendour, nor for sparkling heavens ;  
Nor for the luxury of golden noons ;  
Nor for the mellow moonshine, under which  
The cedar sinks to sleep ; nor for the breeze  
That cools the olive on the mountain-slope ;  
Nor for all these together, would I seek  
The mighty East. I know that it is fair !  
Majestic slope of royal Lebanon,  
Up which the sea-breeze rushes, when the storm  
Is marshalling its strength ! Gorges of gloom,  
Thro’ whose split crags Leontes flows in power,  
As if some giant, with a two-edged sword,  
Had lengthwise cleft the mountain-ridge in twain,  
From peak to lowest base, and left behind  
The flashing weapon quivering in the rock ;  
On whose precipitous ledges root themselves  
The wild fig or the yellow jessamine,  
And thro’ whose crevices the upper snow,  
Dissolved by summer’s sun, pours itself down  
In lucid rills, or gushes wildly out  
In mirthful fountains, to enrich and bless  
The gardens and the orchards underneath.

‘ Yet not for all this beauty would I seek  
The fragrant East, but for more glorious things :  
There rose the sun that shall go down no more ;  
There sprang the fountain that shall water earth ;  
There burst the glory that shall never pale ;  
There rose the life with which death strove in vain ;  
There was the golden chain prepared and forged  
Which knitteth earth to heaven ; there also stood  
The more than golden ladder which connects  
These lower chambers with the upper halls ;  
There was the manger-cradle within which  
Eternity was laid ; there stood the cross  
Where love and justice met ; there was the tomb  
From which came immortality and joy ;  
There was the fiery battle fought and won,  
Beneath Melchizedec’s old city wall,  
Outside the gate, where Death, his two-edged sword  
Unsheathing as a conqueror, smote the Life,  
And in that smiting lost his victory.  
To thee, dear land ! first home of heavenly truth,  
And ancient fount of that all-healing sunshine  
That yet shall fill this light-forsaken earth,—  
To thee, dear land, old well of life divine,  
And birthplace of eternal liberty,  
The heart still turns, and from thy incense-hills  
Inhales the odours of a lower heaven.

‘ Not always westward has the current flowed ;  
Eastward and southward was the progress once,  
And many an eastern, many a southern realm  
Has drunk the living water from the fount  
Whence our great fathers drew their primal stores

Of knowledge and of art. Since then the tide  
Has turned, and the old rivers seem to find  
A new and vaster watershed, whence still  
The ancient centres pour their melting snows  
Upon the fields of other continents.

‘ Westward the current has for ages flowed :  
The genial East, the ancient home of truth,  
Well-watered once, has long been bare and dry.  
At last the tide has struck its bounds, and turns  
Back to its birthplace on the eastern plains,  
Where the old rivers ran, the old cities stood,  
The old altars smoked to the one living God,  
At Uz or Bethel,—shrines of ancient faith,—  
Hebron, or Shiloh, or Moriah’s hill ;  
It is already on its way, to make  
That faded land once more the Orient,  
Rising as rises its own cloudless sun,  
Rising as rises its own crownèd palm.  
The East revives ; and see, with it come up  
Ages of history, once all but lost ;  
Stone-carved, and buried in the drifted sand  
Of Khorsabad or Philae or Dibhân.  
The East awakes,—rich in its own past wealth,  
So long entombed ; rich, too, in the full store  
Of western treasure ;—East and West together,  
Parent and offspring, gathering their one harvest  
To fill the universal earth with joy.

‘ The Orient is not dead, it only sleeps ;  
Its sun has not gone down, ’tis only veiled.  
It has a future which we dream not of,  
A future for itself and for the world :

Its dawn of resurrection is at hand.  
The mosque, which like a gravestone covers it,  
From farthest Cabul to the rock of Tyre,  
Shall be rolled off ; and the great Life shall come  
Like a new morning to the land of morn.

“Uncover ye your heads as ye go in  
To worship God within His holy house :”  
So speaks the younger West, with its new thoughts  
Of holiness in wall and arch and roof.  
“Uncover ye your feet as ye pass in  
To holy places, where a present God  
Is worshipped in His glorious majesty :”  
So speaks the older East, with its old thoughts  
Of holy ground beneath our feet, which man  
Must not defile, but tread with footstep clean.

‘ Each has its thoughts of holy majesty ;  
Each has its attitude of reverence ;  
To each the way is open which leads up  
To the eternal throne, where priestly lips  
Pronounce the royal pardon in the name  
Of everlasting justice to each one,  
Of East or West, who names the blessed Name.  
Within the souls of both, the mighty truth,  
Working, reveals itself in different ways.  
“God is a spirit ; they who worship Him  
Must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”  
And in that day when the unsandalled East  
Shall meet the uncovered West, and both in crowds  
Ascend the holy hill, all earth shall join  
In one unjarring song, the song of men  
Who, with their many lips and dialects,

Shall find themselves all one in Him whose cross  
Shall be the uplifted banner of the world,  
Centre and basis of all holy worship ;  
Whose throne in Salem shall become the seat  
Of righteous law and happy government  
To a delivered world, in which both East  
And West shall form one people and one realm.

‘ The same fair moon that lights up Lebanon  
Spreads its sweet silver o'er our Grampian heath ;  
The dews and suns of every age are one ;  
And the same rainbow, bright with ancient love,  
Weaves its one wreath for every cloud and clime ;  
The sun of May, rich, bright, Italian May,  
Melting the snow upon the Splugen steeps  
To flood the willow-shaded Valteline,  
Calls up a paradise of heaven-sown flowers,—  
Miles of blue gentian, Alpine amethysts,  
Like drops of molten azure from the sky ;  
The primrose and the snowflake by the shore  
Of Leman, when the spring-noon gathers strength,  
And frosts are melting from its tangled slopes ;  
Night-scenting daphne, making darkness sweet ;  
And violets bursting thro' the mouldering leaves  
Of the last autumn's oaks beside the moss :  
These are the broidered girdle of the earth,  
That binds all realms together into one,  
As if pervaded by a common soul.  
The soft March rain of Palestine, that brings  
Fertility and warmth in every drop,  
Comes down upon her broken terraces  
And ruin-cumbered soil ; then everywhere

Bursts up the wind-flower and the cyclamen,  
Where the grey sand or rubbish lay before.

‘Thus round the globe moveth the breath of God ;  
Thus all the earth receives His daily love,  
In sun or shower or odour-bearing breeze ;  
And His one family sit down beneath  
His silent wing to share His gracious smile.

‘Thus round the globe moveth the light of God,  
Rising and setting everywhere,—one sun.  
I see it now, as o'er yon mountain curve  
It bends its downward sweep, the same fair sun  
That rose this morning over other hills ;  
It droops and disappears, yet still I see  
Its rays flung back from yonder rocky spire,  
That like a watch-tower lifts itself on high.  
But now it fades ; the twilight comes apace ;  
The glow has vanished from the mountain-peak,  
And the celestial *abend-kuss* is gone.

‘Thus in earth’s mould is sown the seed of God,  
Impregnated with universal life.  
Faithful has been this mother-earth to each  
Small seed or root entrusted to her bosom ;  
And faithfully in her appointed time  
Does she refund the treasure lodged within her.  
When summer comes apace, the patient earth,  
Long silent, as if wholly dumb, takes up  
The frozen or forgotten lute, and sings  
Its ancient plain-song to the answering woods,  
And ocean never mute, or wingèd stream.  
So faithfully, to liken great to small,  
Shall this true earth refund the immortal seed

Sown in her soil, with sevenfold usury,  
In the great resurrection-harvest, when,  
At rising of the never-setting sun,  
From the dead dust shall spring the glorious life ;  
Beauty exchanged for vileness and for shame,  
Mortal become immortal, and the furrows  
Of the long mute and barren grave at length  
Yielding on earth the ripened fruit of heaven ;  
The lower discords here dissolved at length  
In higher harmonies, and the great song  
Of the vast universe then taking in  
Its deepest notes, unheard, unknown before ;  
The one eternal purpose folding out  
To its wide uttermost of joy and love,  
And all the compass of its music then  
Played out in full, unhindered and unstayed.

‘ The lack of sunlight (so thought men of old)  
Turns gold to iron ; and the sun, they said,  
Pouring its yellow radiance into iron,  
Turns it to gold. So think I when I see  
The iron of this iron age : it lacks  
The sun. And then I gladly think, that when  
The fair new sun of the long-promised day  
Shall sweetly rise, in its omnipotence  
Of transformation, on this waiting world,  
All shall be gold again, as at the first ;  
And the bright age, renowned in ancient song,  
Begin the joy of its unending noon.

‘ The bearer of good tidings knocketh boldly,  
Demanding instant entrance ; of ill news  
The messenger knocks faintly, and with hand

That falters while it knocks. I seem to hear  
In these strange days, and in the varied voices  
Of men and things around me everywhere,  
The loud, the loving, the impatient knock  
Of Him who brings good tidings to the world  
Of truth and order and deliverance  
At hand ; when evil shall have done its worst,  
And to some second cross have nailèd all  
That is or good or true upon the earth.

‘ I would not be of those who speak of what  
They know not, nor can see with mortal eye,  
Eager to plunge into the tangled thicket  
Of the great life beyond their little own,  
Impatient of the present and the past.  
And yet the ripple speaks the rising wind ;  
The ruby dimple on the cheek of dawn  
Says night is done ; the crash of breaking ice  
In the far rivers of the frozen north  
Says spring is come, and summer is at hand.  
So look I round, and gather up the meaning  
Of these surrounding discords. Evil comes,  
And yet that evil is the womb of good.  
The upas-tree is blossoming, and yet  
From its far-scattered seed there shall arise  
No second upas. In its place comes up  
The tree of life, beneath which men shall sit,  
And from whose boughs shall drop the eternal fruit.

‘ Creation is in travail, and the birth  
Will be divine ; the mother and the child  
Like, yet unlike : the child supremely fair,  
Sealed with the seal of everlasting youth,—

A world without a wrinkle or a frown,  
The dew of morning ever on its brow.

‘ The dynasties of earth are looking out  
For the last earthquake, under whose fell stroke  
Each shall go down in darkness, making room  
For the eternal monarchy that now  
Is on its way to take the place of all,  
And do for earth what they have failed to do.  
Europe succumbs, like to the fabled maid,  
Crushed with the armour heaped upon her head.  
Its crowns dissolve ; the iron and the clay,  
Long knit, now break asunder, beaten down  
Like dust beneath the feet, and swept away  
Like the light chaff of summer threshing-floor.  
The City of the Seven Hills sinks in gloom  
Beneath the angel’s millstone, to be found  
No more ; her place and name for ever gone.  
The oriflamme of Gaul is torn and dim ;  
The double eagle droops its broken wing ;  
The chaos of the kingdoms now has come ;  
Sceptres and spears lie broken on the plains ;  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, is now  
The doom of earthly splendour, east and west.  
Mortal magnificence, like mountain snow,  
Has melted down before the rising sun.

‘ Not till the race is ended do we know  
Who is the winner : time will tell us all.  
This only do we know, for Truth hath said it,  
The last shall be the first, the first the last.  
The swiftest are the silentest. The slow  
Grate heavily upon their ponderous wheels ;

The eagle noiseless cuts the unconscious air ;  
And the red bolt is heard but when it smites ;  
The arrow-showers of light are shot in silence  
By the bright archer as he moves on high.  
'Tis not the noise that marks or tests the progress ;  
Mute is the speed of men in earnest, brief  
The words they speak when shooting to the goal.  
The language of the lips is loud and hollow ;  
The language of the heart is deep and low.

'Let us move on. The world is growing old,  
And suns set quickly now ; in ambush lies  
The foe on every side ; we may not tarry.  
Day scatters us, but night doth gather all ;  
The darkness summons home, and we obey,  
Swiftly and silently we hasten forward ;  
We must not loiter till to-morrow here ;  
Ere stars are set, and the next sun is up,  
We must be home within our city-gate.

'But,—softly,—for the way is rough and steep ;  
The unshod foot must still avoid the thorn,  
And shun the stone o'er which it once has stumbled :  
What one false step may do we cannot tell.  
Yet, strongly, strongly, tho' you softly press  
Along the way ; it will need all your strength.  
They know the stream who have been swimming hard  
Against its violence : slacken not your strokes,  
Lest in a moment the great torrent-rush  
Of human custom sweep thee powerless down,  
And cast thee cold upon an unknown shore.

'Let us move up. The height will soon be reached  
From which the earth becomes invisible,

And only heaven is seen. Both hope and fear,  
From which temptations spring, will soon be left  
Beneath our feet, and we shall see the banner  
That waves upon the everlasting walls,  
And beckons us to rise. Below is night,  
Above is day ; behind us is the toil,  
Before the rest in which the weariness  
Of time's slow hours is all submerged at last.  
No longer groaneth the astonished air  
With human grief ; the height on which we stand  
Makes every sound of earth inaudible.

‘When at that height of heights where all is pure  
And calm as the eternal atmosphere,  
Into which storm has never found its way,  
Shall struggling creaturehood at length arrive ?  
We grope and grovel here, while overhead  
Sit the eternal beauty and high love  
Beckoning us upwards, and yet upwards still.

‘To rise on wing, and find our tranquil way  
To yon sweet star that rests in joy above us,  
Like a snow-covered island far at sea,  
How bright the thought, as day by day we climb  
The slippery steep, or leap life's awful chasms !  
But when,—but when shall that glad flight be made ?  
Not to yon sparkling island of the blest,  
But to a region more divinely fair,  
Where He whom now we see not reigns in light.

‘That light has come into the world ; but men  
Have loved the darkness, and that heavenly ray  
Has found no home nor resting-place. It has  
Passed on from land to land, but stayed not long

In any ; and its rushing course has been  
A torch-race of the ages, not yet done.  
It has sought children everywhere ; and yet  
Men have refused the sonship ! As if all  
That such a fatherhood could offer were  
But mockery of a nature such as theirs.

‘ I’ve known the night ; when shall I taste the day ?  
I’ve sat in silence, with the sobbing gust  
My one companion, and the shaken leaf  
My gentle comforter, and the tired ripple  
With soft sound falling on the moist grey sand,  
The type of weary life ; with troubled eye,  
Yet heart of hope, watching in patient joy  
The long low flicker of the evening star  
Across the heaving wave. I’ve seen its setting,  
And the sad night come down ; then have I watched  
For morn till morning came ; and when it came,  
My inmost soul rejoiced, my eye grew bright.

‘ O light of the eternal ages, come,  
And with the sunshine of unsetting day  
End the long midnight of humanity,  
Which thou alone canst end. Fill with thyself  
These heavy skies ; pour down thy love upon  
The hills and valleys of this ancient earth,  
Which waits for thee, that thou and it together  
May yet rejoice, thou resting o’er it fondly,  
And it as fondly looking up to thee,  
The blight, the tempest, and the gloom all gone.

‘ Death is not life’s necessity ; but life  
Is the one great necessity of death,  
And out of death shall rise, in buoyant power

And beauty incorruptible, no more  
To feel the law of weakness and decay.  
Yet death is awful in its strength, and yet  
More awful in its silence. Everywhere  
We find its serpent-trail ; without the sound  
Of axes or of hammers, it lays low  
All that of life this vital earth contains,  
The young, the gay, the strong, the beautiful.  
It does not need the battle-field to slay,  
Nor the dread blow of the hot lightning-bolt  
To separate the temple from its guest,  
The body from its co-mate here, the soul.  
Death steals into the perfumed room of wealth,  
As into the dark cell of poverty.  
Como's sweet, sunny lake can quench young life  
As surely as the dark sea of the North,  
That lays its daily siege to the lone rock  
Of the far Hebrides, and breaks in foam  
Upon the cliffs of Jura or of Lorn.

‘ There comes a time when night shall not be needed,  
But only day,—one long, long, loving day.  
O night and coolness after day's fierce glow !  
O night and darkness after noon's red blaze !  
How I have loved you, counting your soft shade  
Sweeter than day ! And shall I part from you  
Without a sigh, remembering how oft  
Ye comforted and cooled our burning hearts ?  
O soother of so many griefs, farewell ! ’

## BOOK IX.

---

THE stars are out upon their pilgrimage,  
And the sweet moon looks round in sympathy,  
Listening, as, one by one, they sing in joy  
Their nightly song in the blue-vaulted hall  
Above us, moving on their pilgrim way  
To some far shrine that eye hath never seen.

So let me follow them in love and song  
To Him who gave them all their happy brightness !  
So let me move in constancy like theirs  
Thro' all my nightly course, till day shall dawn,  
And every orb has hid its stedfast beams  
In rising light superior to its own.

A little bluer, and it will be dawn ;  
A little fairer, and it will be morn ;  
A little brighter, and it will be noon ;  
And then the tide of day begins to ebb !—  
Is this the story of our common life ?

A little paler, and it will be eve ;  
A little shadier, and the twilight falls ;  
A little darker, and the night has come ;  
And then the blank, broad midnight !—Is this life ?  
And is the growth of this immortal being

But the brief story of a summer's day,  
Made up of dew and sunlight, and beguiled  
With hourly changes, like the varying notes,  
Swelling or dying, of some wandering tune,  
Which the great wind is playing as it sweeps  
Thro' the brown network of the moorland pines :

Life is but fantasy to some ; a mist  
Steeped in soft sunshine, vanishing at eve.  
To them the ideal is the true, the real  
The false. They fashion for themselves a dream,  
And call it life ; while that which God has made  
For them, they call the commonplace and stale,  
Beneath the dignity of royal minds.

Fancy repeats itself, and false life glides  
Into some beaten track ; true life alone  
Is fresh, and has a pathway for herself ;  
Original by being simply true,  
And acting itself out in common things.  
Debtor to none on earth, she lets the voice  
Pent up within her, in its native tones,  
Speak out her own true thoughts, that they may do  
The life-long work for which each one was given.  
She lets the eye see what the Moulder meant  
That it should look upon ; she lets the ear  
Hear all the music it was meant to hear ;  
She lets the seed within her spring and bear,  
After its kind, its own peculiar fruit,  
Unforced alike in season or in clime,  
As the free sunshine and the generous air  
May draw out the ripe riches of its root,  
And make it all itself, and not another.

Let man be man, and woman, woman still.  
Let ocean still be ocean, and the stream  
Be still the stream, the breeze be still the breeze.  
Let noon be noon, and night the sable fringe  
Spangled with silver on the robe of day ;  
And these low clouds, that hang above the east  
Like scattered plumage of the purple morn,  
Still be the clouds for suns to gaze upon  
And stars to hide in. Each thing God has made,  
Let it be just itself. Let not one life  
Steal from its fellow, nor the holy lines,  
Dividing form and colour and sweet sounds  
One from the other, be erased or dimmed.  
'Tis not one general soul that fills the race,  
Nor one monotonous voice that speaks in all ;  
Each being has its landmarks and its laws,  
For beauty and for use ; then let not law  
Be mixed with law until all law be lost,  
And sea with sky be mingled, hill and plain  
Tumbled together, and the rainbow blanched  
Into one pale and cold monotony.  
He who made law, and all that law brings forth,  
Draws His own lines of beauty, form, and order,  
And gives each atom of the universe  
Its own position, and assigns its work.

Each kind and species, both in soul and body,  
Takes after a divine selection, which  
Man has no power to thwart ; God, and not man,  
Bade this bright globe revolve, and all things on it  
Move onward in the path His wisdom chose,—  
His will, not theirs, the inexorable law.

The vales are greener than the hills ; the hills  
Are greener than the rocks ; the rocks, again,  
Are greener than the sea-bleached sands. Yet who  
Would fuse them all in one, or choose the greenest,  
Casting out all the rest ? Or who would make  
Earth one wide lawn, and turn the waving scene  
Of rough and smooth, fruitful and barren land,  
Into one round of tame, uncheckered verdure ?  
Each song-bird has its note ; the joyous lark,  
Poised on the breeze of dawn ; the mellow thrush,  
Haunting the grove of noon ; the nightingale,  
Sweetening the darkness with its loving lay,—  
Each sings its own wild song. Each gracious flower,  
Fresh from the bosom of its mother earth,  
Has its own fragrance and peculiar hue ;  
Spring-lilies, pale as dawn ; the feather-grass,  
All plumage ; willows shading the sweet brook  
They love so well ; the ivy, with its tresses,  
Hiding the ruin which it makes so fair ;  
All beautiful, yet no one borrowing  
Aught from his fellow ; each itself a voice  
Speaking a language of its own, and choosing  
Its season and its soil, its scent and hue.

So has each human spirit its own life,  
Lesser or greater, which it must expand,  
As does the bud the blossom, as the root  
The tree of its own kindred. Woe to him  
Who fondly covets what is not his own,  
And lives a borrowed life ; who tries to do  
Another's work and speak another's words,  
As greater, worthier, loftier than his own !

Nobly does every part of earth and sea  
Do its own work, and keep its stedfast course.  
Learn here thy lesson, vain, ambitious man !  
Do thine own work, and do it well while here ;  
Bring out into full stretch thy proper strength,  
Misused, it may be, or unused before.  
Sweep the whole compass of your God-given lyre,  
And let the unstolen music of your being  
Come daily out into a jarring world.  
So shall you tell upon that world, as you  
Were meant to do, and leave some mark behind.

I stood upon the lofty Münster-platz  
Of Roman Basel, seat of ancient kings.  
Hard by me crouched the venerable crypt  
Where Haus-schein and his noble co-mates rest.  
Behind me rose the double spire, round which  
Six centuries have thrown their solemn shade ;  
And where, beneath the high cathedral arch,  
In pale red marble old Erasmus sleeps.  
Far down beneath me the great Rhine rushed on,  
Winding and foaming ; on its sleepless bosom  
Barges and bridges, and the busy craft  
That bears along the priceless merchandise  
Of cities and of nations. There it flows,  
As it has flowed since Rome and Cæsar stemmed it,  
Doing its own old work unchangeably,  
The highway of the nations, and the wall  
That fences states and kingdoms, looking round  
Upon the thousand cities which it feeds,  
The ruined castles which it once defended,  
And the ten thousand vineyards which it waters.

There, downward still it sweeps with changeless course  
Upon its ancient mission, as it holds  
Its fearless way to the far Northern Sea.  
Each river has its pilgrimage, on which  
It hastes, like one in earnest, staff in hand ;  
Nor stops nor swerves till it has reached the goal,  
And knocketh at the ocean-gates for entrance  
Into the rest which it hath sought so long ;  
Some through strange deserts, silent as the night ;  
Some trickling down the cliff like silver spray ;  
Some stealing cold and turbid from beneath  
The sliding glacier ; some through fields of green ;  
Some through long avenues of palms ; and some  
Through streets of mighty cities, or by towers  
Each stone of which old fable has adorned ;  
Some by the slopes of the sun-fronting vineyard ;  
And some beneath the shadow of the pine.  
Thus, woven into song and story, from  
Its mountain-cradle to its ocean-tomb,  
Each pilgrim-river, chanting its own lay,  
Or low or loud, pours onward to the deep.

O music of the living streams of earth,  
How sweet ! Each river with its well-known tune,  
Unlike and yet so like its fellows, sings,  
Not flowers alone, but human hearts to rest.  
Sing on, ye streams and streamlets, still sing on,  
And cease not, day nor night ; your well-strung chords  
Have known no breaking, nor shall know it ; still  
Throughout the ages speaking love to man,  
Brightening and cheering, as ye pass along,  
Ten thousand homes with your bright words of peace !

So mused I silently, as o'er and o'er  
I turned the wrinkled pages lying round ;  
Now taking up, now laying down again  
The well-worn relics of long-buried years  
Which rise to life again in every page.  
Here folds out one, with small tears spotted o'er,  
Youth's first and bitterest,—tears dried up in haste,  
As if the weeper were ashamed of each,  
Wishing the stains undone. She writes as one  
Dreaming o'er girlhood's memories ; o'er love,  
That like a gilded barque went down beneath her,  
Herself at once the wrecker and the wrecked.  
' I was too young to love, and yet I loved ;  
He wooed and won me, though he knew it not.  
Happy, yet half-ashamed, and insolent,  
In the first consciousness of budding beauty,  
I would not have it known that I was won.  
He thinks of you, a maiden said to me ;  
He thinks of me, I said to my own heart ;  
And that one glowing dream of being loved  
Set my whole life on fire, and wakened up  
All womanhood within me, ripening  
With passion's sudden heat my unripe girlhood,  
Turning me into woman ere I knew.

' I saw none like him among all the many  
That came and went, and he saw none like me.  
I knew it, and I trembled with delight,  
Yet hid alike my passion and my joy.  
But eyes will speak when lips are false or dumb ;  
For youth interprets silence, drinks in hope,  
And without words one heart can meet another.

So eye looked into eye, and still the spell  
Remained unbroken ; words refused to flow.

‘We met where streams are meeting, where the Arve,  
Strong from its mountain ice-founts, like a spear  
Pierces the yielding Rhone ; again we heard  
The soothing chimes of moonlit waterfalls ;  
Walked the brown moor together ; climbed the cliff,  
Which pine and hazel shaded ; took our way  
Thro’ the old garden, where the flowers seemed strewn  
Like dust of broken rainbows ’neath our feet ;  
Or up the mountain gorge, draped all in gold  
Of furze and broom ; strolled at low sunrise o’er  
The long, grey sandslope, which the sportive wave  
Had just receded from ; or at pale eve  
Drifted along the lake with idle oar,  
Of motion all unconscious ; rather that  
Not we, but the great hills were moving on,  
Thro’ the slow shadows of the languid twilight,  
And the still lake looked as if sailing past us,—  
A tremulous stretch of pearl and amethyst,  
Wrought into rich mosaic, changing still  
Its restless colours as the sun sank low.  
Thus summer hours went by ; the link was knit  
Between us ere we knew, and all the sunshine  
Of these fair months seemed woven unchangeably  
Into our inmost being. Yet we parted ;  
I might have been his bride, and yet we parted :  
I need not tell you how it was, or why ;—  
He to forget my fickleness and scorn,  
Never to know the tears I shed for him ;  
And I to cherish in my heart of hearts,

Till life's last ripple rolls upon the sand,  
The recollections of the manly love  
Which, in my girlish folly and caprice,  
I threw away ; to me for ever lost.  
O first and fondest, let me dream again  
Of love and thee, as in that summer prime  
Of strange new feeling, ere I broke the spell.  
Oh, had he but believed my eye, and not  
My lip, all had been well ; we had not parted ;  
He would have known me truer than I seemed ;  
But he was frank, and I was proud and fair.

‘Then life with me began : self broke in pieces ;  
Youth’s sparkling dreamery dissolved in vapour,  
Like ice-flowers on the window-pane at noon ;  
And out of this dissolvèd self arose  
A truer being ; out of these gay dreams  
Sprang thoughts that went across both sea and earth,  
Wide as the world, and widening still apace,  
As sorrow upon sorrow struck me down.  
For has it not been found that honest smart  
Expels the narrow and brings in the wide ?  
It is the false that shrivels up the soul,  
And feeds the self from which its brooding sprang.

‘Another flower has faded from my path,  
I said in murmur, as the new stroke fell.—  
Another folly fled, say rather thou,  
A deep voice answered from my deeper soul.  
Another blank in this bewildered heart,  
Another vacancy in this full earth,  
Which lately was to me a lower heaven,  
I said in dark and sullen bitterness.

Another idol fallen, the voice replied,  
Another altar to the Unknown God  
Displaced, and its inscription blotted out :  
Room made at length in that o'ercrowded heart  
And this o'erpeopled earth for Him whose light  
Is dearer than the sun's, for Him whose love  
Is richer than the love of lover here.

Another stone in life's once noble arch  
Has fallen, and the whole fabric is unbraced,  
I cried despondingly. The voice replied,  
Another stone is laid here, to complete  
The great foundation of the life to come.

My May of life is all December now ;  
What should have been my summer, all in glow,  
Is winter with its frost. So thought I then ;  
But the true oracle spoke, All is well ;  
Your summer is not lost, 'tis but deferred ;  
Your flowers are coming, sweeter for delay.

Another storm has struck my panting barque,  
Rending the last poor sail that I had spread  
To bear me onward to the haven ; so spoke  
My unbelief. The answer came again ;  
Another breeze to bear thee swiftly home :

All storms blow over here ; some simply sink  
To rest, while others die in joyous sunshine.

Love on, work on ; thy day of love and work  
Amid thy fellows here will soon be done.

At death our doing of the work is o'er,  
But the work done remains, endures for ever.

We die, but that which we have done still lives,  
Bearing its proper fruit when we are gone ;

Our doings are the blossoms out of which  
The fruit for coming ages is to grow.'

I fold another out ; it speaks ambition,  
And utters thoughts of restless enterprise.  
'Only the blind man asks what beauty is,  
And why it is so fondly doated on.  
Only the man who has no eye for aught  
Like a divine ideal in creation  
Would set up for the architect of earth,  
And turn away from such a scene as this  
Which spreads before me here. The beautiful  
Is not extinct, nor shall be while He lives  
Who is the source and fountainhead of beauty.  
It liveth on and on for evermore,  
Flowing and ebbing, fading, freshening still,  
In daily change, like hues upon the cloud  
That fronts the setting or the rising sun.  
The rustle of yon forest is a song,  
The quiver of yon leaf is gracefulness.  
The bulk of yon grim mountain-cliff is strength,  
The twinkle of yon river is a smile ;  
And beauty wanders o'er the gleaming wave,  
Or, with the sinking sun, climbs peak by peak  
That purple hill, till from its topmost rock  
It takes its flight into the ambient gloom.

'What I have seen but makes me long the more  
To look and look again on this fair world.  
I love to think of earth's unvisited  
And unknown scenes of beauty or of terror ;  
The scorching splendour of the torrid south,

Or ice-lights of Spitzbergen's murky noon,  
Gleaming across her fields of ancient snow,  
Unstained by the red war-print. For I doubt not  
That there are thousands of these hidden nooks,  
In deep Brazilian forest, where the palm  
And myrtle intertwine, like strength and beauty ;  
Or Cuban meadows, sloping to the sea,  
Where the luxuriant wild-flowers strew the plain,  
And make a western Paradise, a strange,  
Bright realm of fragrance, where all various forms  
And hues are seen that eye can revel in ;  
Wild virgin landscapes, stretching everywhere  
O'er pathless continents, which human vision  
Has never yet been gladdened with, true mines  
Of silent wealth, untouched, and yet to yield  
Their treasures to the gazer, and to fill  
Millions of souls with wonder or with love !

‘Scenes are there of the cliff or strand, to haunt  
The dreams of poet, or, more blessed still,  
To mould a nation's heart and change the currents  
Of its great history, as rocks the stream,  
Roughening the water, but imparting force,  
And drawing out the hidden life below :  
And mazy glens there are, walled in with rocks,  
Thro' which the torrent leaps, and, as it leaps,  
Calls out a world of echoes ; where above  
Perches the lonely pine or shining birch,  
And in its hollow nestles the wild rose ;  
While right across the abyss of spray and foam  
Sails the strong eagle on its way to heaven.

‘Ye hoary regions of the silent pole,

With your chaste coverlets of virgin snow,  
Your boundless fields of everlasting ice,  
And peaks that poise the north-star far on high,—  
How I should joy, tho' but for one brief day,  
To gaze upon your mute magnificence ;  
The deep, stern stillness of the frozen air ;  
The never-setting sun, that mocks the plains  
With its faint warmth ; the ever-floating mists,  
That wander ghost-like through the shivering sky ; .  
The blue, cold shadows hovering everywhere ;  
The cliffs that overhang a world of death ;  
The roll of the long line of surf, that falls  
And rises, as it moans along the strand ;  
The melancholy waterfall that pours  
From the vast iceberg as it melts at noon,  
Unseen and unadmired by human eye,  
In chill monotony upon the wave ;  
The harsh dull grating of the crystal blocks,  
As, one by one, they strike and grind and fall ;  
The lonely sea-gulls perched upon the ice  
Or rocked upon the swell ; the snowy bear,  
Prowling amid the drift to seize its prey ;  
The seal and walrus stretched upon the floe ;  
The grey fox stealing o'er the ice-bound stones ;  
The treeless, shrubless, flowerless wastes of snow,  
With only the dark lichen on the crag,  
Last spark of nature's unextinguished fire :  
All numbness and all death ; no May-day glow,  
No frost-dissolving warmth, no living sunshine,  
No blossoms bursting to the April breeze,  
No dew upon the face of the dead soil,

No streamlet tumbling like a playful child  
Between its banks of willow or of moss ;  
But tyrannous winter, crushing hill and vale  
Beneath its weight of never-yielding snow,  
And breathing death into the dull, hard air ;  
As if there were two worlds upon this globe,  
One green as paradise, the other pale,  
Like splintered fragment of the marble moon.

‘ Of men and things beyond life’s little range,  
Visions and memories and hopes gone by,  
Yet vivid still and verdant as of old,  
Speaks this fair dawn-break, upon which I gaze  
While seated here, and watching while I sit  
The iridescence of yon twilight sky,  
With its unrisen sun and fading stars,  
Each in its order passing out of sight ;  
The last, the loveliest, as it vanishes,  
Buried in brightness brighter than its own.  
See how each trembler sinks into the blue,  
Dissolved like snow-flake in the hungry wave ;  
Becoming part of the pale golden dome  
In which its light like a rich pearl was set,  
Ere sunshine, fusing with its magic skill  
The gem and its soft setting into one,  
Hid in the glow of morn the star of night,  
Till eve, with resurrection-power, once more  
Shall bring it up in beauty from the tomb.

‘ How various in its power to please and cheer  
Is that which we call nature ! Yet I find  
Ofttimes the change is all within myself,  
And not in her. I change, and change again ;

And the same scene seems either dark or bright,  
As is the varying mood in which I see it.  
It was but yesterday I looked around  
Upon a wondrous sweep of scene, spread out  
In loveliness of forest, vale, and stream ;  
Yet I saw nothing save a blank, bleak outline,  
From which had fled all greatness and all soul.  
To-day I wander out, and the same scene  
Unrolls its marvels, and my soul is tranced.  
The landscape is too vast, too rich, for eye  
To take in half its splendour and its joy.  
It seemed as if some spirit had gone forth  
From my own inner man, and overspread  
With a glad veil of life and loveliness  
A scene which yesterday was dead and cold,  
Without a meaning and without a soul,  
As if no pulse were beating, and no voice  
Were coming up from lips once soft with song.

‘ What I have seen of cities far and near,  
Ruined or still robust in manhood’s growth,  
But makes me long to see what once was seen  
Upon this earth, of grandeur or of grace,  
In cities that have perished, leaving but  
The fragment of a name, round which have sprung  
Fables like weeds, or noble legends like  
The ivy ever bright, to deck their stones.  
Sea-buried Tyre, or sand-swept Nineveh ;  
The hundred-gated Thebes, the wasted Troy ;  
Carthage, the mighty city of the sea,  
Phoenicia’s younger daughter, like her parent,  
Renowned alike in commerce and in war,

City and port and empire all in one,  
The more than Venice of the ancient earth,  
Which in a night went o'er the cataract,  
And vanished, flung into Time's oubliette,  
Down which all things have disappeared, or shall  
Ere long, the best and worst, the great and small,  
Kingdoms and kings, the doer and the deed,  
The thinker and the thought ; all things except  
The few which history in her caprice  
Has plucked from dull oblivion ; hopes and fears,  
The joys and sorrows of a human heart,  
The infant's smile and age's long-drawn sigh,  
The broken fortunes and the withered strength  
Of families and realms long passed away ;—  
Down which have sunk not only man himself,  
But his most stable handiworks,—the tower,  
The gate, the column, and the obelisk,  
The temple and the palace and the hall,  
The glory or the shame of ages gone.

‘From the dull morn of yesterday until  
To-day, and from to-day until to-morrow,  
And from to-morrow till the day that follows,  
There are but as three sand-grains on the shore,  
Three oscillations of Time's pendulum,  
Three atoms of our vast infinity.  
And yet in these how much has come and gone  
Of sorrow and of joy, of death and life !  
How much of the strange infinite of man  
Has been begun that ne'er shall have an end !  
For nothing ceases, tho' from memory  
And eye it vanishes, as lost for ever,

But still prolongs its motion or its being.  
All things beget, and in their offspring live,  
For evil or for good, still on and on.  
Nothing is revocable : all things said  
Or done by the obscurest child of earth  
Speed on their arrowy way ; and wide and far  
Send out thro' time and space their widening waves,  
In everlasting undulations round  
The universe, for better or for worse.  
And sometimes that which has been left unsaid  
Or left undone (which ought to have been done  
And spoken when the speaking and the doing  
Would have borne fruit for ages) makes a blank  
Which nothing can replace, and draws on issues  
Greater than that which has been said or done.

‘ The infant’s finger, with unconscious touch,  
Raises the ripple on the summer-sea  
Which the strong man is impotent to smooth.  
Millions of arrows shot by human hands  
Into the infinite of space and time,  
Often without a thought, without an aim,  
Must wander onward, in diverging flight,  
To tell upon the universe for ever.

‘ Some have the wisdom, others have the gold ;  
A few,—their number is but small,—have both.  
What is the world the better for it all ?  
Some doat on riches, others worship power ;  
Some bend the knee to fortune or to fate,  
Others look down on life with folded hands ;  
Some dream their days out, tangled in the snares  
Of potent beauty, hiding heaven from man ;

And others know not what it is to love,  
But float along in frozen selfishness,  
Like icy fragments when the rivers melt.  
Strange world ! Strange dreams ! So soon, so soon  
to end !'

Thus writes the friend whose name I do not name,  
Who made his earnest way thro' life, and sowed  
Seeds as he passed along, and left the earth  
Richer, not poorer, for his being here.  
And musing o'er his fruitful days, I said,—  
Some lives are great in fame, and other some,  
Not great, are useful, filling up the space  
Allotted them with noble days and deeds.  
They move on bravely, and they reach the goal ;  
They do not say and unsay, do and undo,  
Leaving behind them not one stedfast word,  
No high consistency of life-long work ;  
They do not wind about upon themselves,  
Denying all that once they boldly held ;  
Nor move along without advancing, like  
The idle skiff that drifts, it knows not whither,  
And at the weary day's end finds itself  
Returning back to where it left at noon.

Steer for the haven with steady hand and helm ;  
Press to the noble end ; work out your work  
Till it is done ; slack not your energy  
Nor stay your pace because the way is long.  
Faint not, but work ; the world is calling loud  
For fearless workmen in its day of need.  
Shrink not, but work ; the Master needeth thee :  
One sickle-stroke will not the harvest reap ;

One blow will not bring down the forest-oak ;  
One oar-sweep will not fetch the boat to land.

Truth takes the shape of work ; as seed it goes  
Throughout the nations, visible and great.  
Truth takes the form of facts, and out of these,  
As from eternal seed, it springs, and spreads  
Over all climes and ages. Let thy life  
Be truth in every part ; so written down  
And so translated as that all may read.  
Once He was here on earth, who spoke and did  
As none have ever done before or since ;  
For all His words were works, His works were words,  
The words and works of everlasting health.  
Poor is that word, by whomsoever spoken,  
Or wheresoever, that becometh not  
A work ; and poor the work, however great  
It seem, that is not in itself a word  
Laden with truth that dies not, nor grows old.

Look full into the future : it is thine.  
Thy path lies yonder ; thou must tread it all,  
And not another for thee ; 'tis thine own.  
Let the clear eye show the clear conscience, purged  
From guilt's disquietude by that which brings  
A righteous peace to the tormented spirit.  
Know Him to whom that future all belongs,  
And fear not then to gaze into its depths.  
The gate is open, and He leads thee in ;  
He shows thee what is coming, and He bids  
Thee measure well the present by the future,  
The narrow *now* by the far-ranging *then*.  
He points to ripened evil, ripened good,

And by the ripe fruit bids thee judge the tree.  
He takes thee to the loftiest peak, and says,  
Look down afar, and see the distant light  
Of rising suns, or suns about to rise  
Upon the crests of the eternal hills ;  
Hear the keen echoes of the far-off joy ;  
Inhale the fragrance of the myrrh and balm  
Wafted to us upon the wakeful breeze,  
That wanders downward, from the paradise  
Which lies beyond the sepulchres of earth.

Look full into that future, and take on  
Its colours and its odours and its form.  
Live in it now, and it will mould thy being ;  
Seek to be now what thou shalt be hereafter.  
There is a holy city for the holy ;  
Live as its citizens, and learn its ways,  
Its laws, its customs, its companionships.  
There is a home of peace for men of peace ;  
Seat thyself under its eternal palms,  
By the life-river which is flowing there,  
All crystal, clearer than the sunny Nile,  
Or shaded Jordan, or the mountain-streams  
Whose living silver-gleams make glad the vales  
Of the dear northern land which we call home ;  
Drink in its melodies, and steep thine eyes  
In its pure glory, as it shines afar ;  
Taste thou the earnest of its royal wine ;  
Put on its raiment of unearthly white,  
And learn the love that has its fountain there.  
Here sorrow lingers, joy goes by in haste ;  
The rainbow vanishes, the cloud remains :

There joy abides, and grief has fled away ;  
The cloud is gone, the brightness never dies.

The future moulds the man ; to-morrow's sun  
Shines sweetly on to-day ; hope ripens us,—  
Like double sunshine, east and west, above,  
Behind us, and in front,—before our time.  
Our guardian angel thou, unseen, unheard  
In thy quick motions round us, sky-born Hope,  
Stooping each hour to cheer us and to bless,  
In all the invisible gentleness of love,  
Which knows no weariness nor stint in giving  
To the beloved one its silent joy !

We nerve ourselves for toil by looking onward  
Into the splendour wherein all shall end.  
Toil tries the spirit, but evokes the man.  
In this our day of poverty we live  
On the forepayment of our recompense ;  
We trade on borrowed wisdom, and the strength  
Of those to whom a double portion came.  
The vine-twigs clasps the elm ; the ivy makes  
The ruined tower its ladder for ascent.  
Thus we enjoy another's wealth ; and yet  
We make him none the poorer, but more rich,  
As having filled a thousand vessels, yet  
Himself o'erbrimming still, like the full sun.  
Thus we increase our present joy by thoughts  
Of the large future, our fair heritage,  
To which, with strenuous step, we hasten on.  
The Church anticipates her holiday,  
And keepeth festival before the time.  
She celebrates her final victory

In thickest of the fight, when enemies  
Swarm round her, like the furious breakers round  
The solitary lighthouse far at sea.

Gaze out into God's future: He has drawn  
Aside some little foldings of the veil,  
And shown us issues which man dreams not of,  
Outlines of mighty thoughts and purposes  
Concerning us and this fair earth of ours,—  
The haunt of evil now and death, ere long  
To be the final seat of life and good.  
Study His plan of progress and ascent ;  
So shall man's dreams and fables cease to charm.  
Filled with Himself and with His glory, see  
How it reveals the grandeur of His throne :  
Foreshadowing the coming reign of good  
Under the holy King, it tells us what  
A king should be, and how the thrones of earth  
Should represent His kingdom, how its crowns  
Should speak of Him to whom they all belong,  
And on whose head they shall ere long be set ;  
Foretoking the coming reign of truth  
Under the Prince of truth, it bids us shun  
The falsehoods that are darkening the earth,  
And, with the name of light, bewildering eyes  
That once were looking for the star of dawn.

Some love the lie, and spend their hollow life  
In spreading it because they love it, or  
Because they look with evil eye upon  
The truth, as that which frowns upon their sin.  
Some cheat themselves into the fond belief  
Of falsehood, as a thing most beautiful ;

Too beautiful to be untrue ; too bright,  
Even tho' delusive, to be flung away.  
Some dream vain dreams of what this world may be,  
Or what it is ; of what its Maker is  
Or what He ought to be as Ruler here,—  
A Father, not a Judge, framing no laws  
But those of nature, and condemning none,  
But leaving each one free to work out all  
The ill or good that may be born with him,  
And then to vanish out of time and space,  
As the cloud passes or the leaf decays,  
Unjudged for good or evil done on earth.  
Thus the two primal falsehoods still assert  
Their ancient sway o'er man, and permeate  
The race with the mute poison they distil :  
' Ye shall not surely die ; ' and ' ye shall be  
As God, discerning both the good and ill.'

Light is but one, and truth, like light, is one ;  
Both claiming kindred with the upper heaven,  
And both asserting for themselves the rights  
Of pure and noble blood, the honour due  
To a divine and royal ancestry.

Count not the future a forbidden realm  
For human footsteps or for mortal eye ;  
It is the dwelling-place of love and joy,  
Where all things true are gathered, where we shall  
Keep the long feast of life's great harvest-home.  
We need the future, as we need the past ;  
Unless with both, our vessel goes astray,  
Or founders in the shifting gales of time.  
The foreship and the stern alike require

The anchor in the evil day ; without  
The beacon and the fog-bell in the night  
Of mist and hurricane, small hope there is  
Of weathering the storm. Look out beyond  
The screen which unbelief, or sense, or science  
May draw before your vision, as if all  
That unseen realm, where we so soon shall be,  
Were the forbidden region into which  
Whoso shall seek to penetrate, tho' God  
Himself shall be his guide, is but a fool.  
The silent land, men call it. Is it so ?  
Is there no sound because we hear it not ?  
Is it not full of voices and of song ?  
None mute among the dwellers there ; none slow  
Nor feeble in their utterance of joy.  
All vocal, like the sound of many streams :  
There are the harpers, harping with their harps ;  
There the full compass of all melody,  
From hearts o'erbrimming with divinest peace.  
They rest not there ; nor day nor night they rest,  
Singing the glorious anthem, ever new ;  
And this the key-note of their endless lay  
In the bright luminous day,—*Jehovah reigns.*

All light is from the sun. What are the lamps  
Or tapers of the earth ? What are the sparks  
Or meteors of the air ? The beacon-lights  
Of ocean, what are they ? The lanterns dim,  
With which men walk the highway or the street,  
What can they do beyond the narrow ring  
Of yellow light, which for an hour they shed  
Upon the timorous and uncertain path

Of him who mourns the absence of the sun,  
And longs for dawn as for a port in storm?

It is but taper-light by which we walk  
Here on this earth, or at the brightest, but  
Cold moonshine ; for the perfect has not come.  
Yet it is coming ; what we know not now  
We shall hereafter learn, when the thick film  
Shall drop from these dull eyes, and we shall know  
As we are known. Earth, on its wings of cloud,  
Rushes thro' space, and bears us swiftly on  
To the long day. When the high noon has come,  
We shall no more our lamps or torches need ;  
And all the visible shall then be seen,  
Farthest and nearest, altho' hidden now  
From eyes which cannot pierce the distant dark,  
Nor the near mysteries which hem us in.

Man lights no stars : his self-made lamps are poor,  
And but reveal the darkness of his night.  
Man lights no suns : his noblest science can  
Create no splendour such as morning brings  
To the fair east, when wood and wave with song  
Welcome the dawn. He only who is Light,  
In whom no darkness is at all,—He only  
Creates and kindles suns ; and who, save He,  
Creates for man's dark spirit that which is  
Brighter than sun of morn ? The light is His,  
And dwells with Him. The truth which is man's sun  
Radiates from Him alone ; self-kindled lamps  
Are but at best as the bewildering flash  
Of sudden lightning, in a moment quenched.  
He is Himself Revealer and Revealed.

Who can reveal the Father but the Son ?  
Who but the Father can the Son reveal ?  
Or who can give us certainty but God ?  
The truth which man needs are the things of God ;  
Not flowers, nor rocks, nor stars, nor suns, nor all  
That dead or living nature speaks to eye  
Or ear or heart. The filling of the soul  
Must come from Him who filled the universe  
With stars and suns. The knowing of His name,  
The finding of Himself, and of the way  
By which the creaturehood of earth can come  
And worship in His presence, from Himself  
Must be derived. The voice of God must speak,  
Or man must err in blindness and in gloom.  
The words of God must from the lips of God  
Be written down with an eternal pen,  
Or man must strain his eye till it grows dim,  
Looking within, without, or near, or far,  
In vain. His wisest and his best may search  
The dumb obscure, until despair benumbs  
The intellect. The unknown remains unknown,  
And man still asks his fellow, What is truth ?  
Nature is but the echo of His voice,  
And not the voice itself ; 'tis but the print  
Of His majestic footstep on the sand,  
But not His feet ; 'tis but the lower skirt  
Of His far-flowing raiment, not Himself.  
The broken frame, the hollow cheek, the pale  
And weary eye, the trembling limb and gait,  
But make us ask, Where is the Perfect One  
'Mid all this imperfection here below ?

These heavens are fair; and yet, with all their beauty,  
How little they reveal of His great being ;  
How little of His heart, with the strong pulses  
Of its deep love ; or of that righteousness  
With which He sways the universe ! Still less  
Can this dismantled earth, with pain and death,  
With wars and terrors, sighs and burning tears,  
With graveyards where a thousand hopes and joys  
Are buried, make known Him whose name is Love.  
God only can reveal Himself ; and sad  
Must be the thoughtful man, if such there be,  
Who, as the sum of his philosophies,  
Proclaims that God has not revealed His name ;  
Has remained mute, and left His creature lone,  
To grope in thickets which he cannot thread ;  
Mocking the outcries of that mighty soul  
Which He has given to man, by drawing round  
His glory the dull mist which human eye  
Can never pierce ; by uttering no voice,  
And flashing down no glory and no love,  
No truth, no light ; refusing to make known  
The infinite, to make the unseen seen ;  
To give a sign of life beyond that blue,  
Or word of peace ; to show, even from afar,  
The gates of a new city and new realm,  
To which man might ascend ; as if He grudged  
To His own offspring the deep blessedness  
Which He Himself enjoys ; as if He sought  
In selfish fulness to prohibit man  
Even from the vision of His outer heaven.

O silent Deity ! whom human schools  
Of thought profess to worship, and of whom  
The poet-sceptic of old Rome once sung ;  
Seated above on thy cold marble throne,—  
If throne thou hast, or soul, or heart, or eye,—  
With nothing of thyself or of thy love  
To tell to weary, broken-hearted man ;  
Hater, not lover of thy children here,  
Was it from hands like thine those burning hearts  
Of ours came forth ? From icy eyes like thine  
Our human tears were drawn ? From lips like thine  
Issued the happy words that bind in one  
The sons and daughters of our scattered race ?  
The gods of Hellas, at their best, all clouds,  
The gods of high philosophy, all stone,  
And truly named the Silences, are but  
Reflections of a cold humanity,  
Whose unthawed pulses have long ceased to beat.  
The deities of science own no love,  
And win no hearts ; in unresponding calm,  
If calm it be, shut up, they but arrest  
The music of the spheres, dislink the creature  
From his Creator, sever heaven from earth,  
Pass out of sight and hearing, lest their calm  
Should be disturbed by this unresting earth.

I take yon block of marble, newly hewn  
From the dead rock ; I shape it into beauty,  
The perfect loveliness of female grace.  
I kneel and say, O marble, love me, love me !  
Does it say yes ? Do these white eyes return  
The glance of mine ? And does that chiselled lip

Press mine with fondness? Or that perfect hand  
Clasp mine with woman's warmth? No; all is cold;  
No love, no sympathy, no heart is there.  
Hearts are not for the chisel, and dear love  
Has nought to do with marble. So thy gods,  
Frigid philosophy, where are they all?  
Distant, not near, and chill as ice or vapour;  
Gods without love, that can give no response  
To the warm pulses of this beating heart,  
Which nought can soothe but the responsive throb  
Of one great heart still warmer than itself.

## BOOK X.

---

‘ FIRST blank in life, first sorrow of my heart’  
(So read I in the record that calls up  
The days of boyhood as they moved along  
In shadow or in light, long passed away) ;  
‘ First bitter drop in the sweet cup of youth !  
My memory goes back to the chill hour,  
When he to whom my reverence and love  
Had early linked themselves went up from us  
To join the heavenly household, ere yet age  
Had crushed him with her threescore years and ten ;  
All his large learning gathered richly round him,  
And his calm faith, that sought the things unseen,  
Lifting him upward, as he walked beneath  
The shadow of the cross,—bright as bright noon  
In all the purity of noble life,  
And all the goodness which makes home a heaven,  
And all the happy wisdom which leads on  
The young and buoyant in their fervent course,  
When the ripe words dropped ripely from his lips,  
As autumn’s fruit falls from the laden tree.

‘ Doubly we knew him ; more than father he,  
The teacher and companion of our youth :  
Doubly he knew us, and in us he found

How true the proverb of the Eastern sages,  
*He who instructs a child begets a son.*

Doubly we loved him, and with childhood's trust  
Leant on his arm, or clasped his willing hand.  
Playful and affable, he drew us out,  
And led us on in safe and sunny ways.

In him we learned that in simplicity  
Of nature is the power to please and mould.  
Knowledge is courteous, and the wise are good ;  
The truly good are simple and sincere ;  
The great are gentle, and the true are tender ;  
All kindness is magnetic, and all wisdom ;—  
One with the other linked, they send abroad  
A common influence to win and bless.

‘Doubly we mourned him ; but the grief moves on,  
And loses its quick edge, or but becomes  
A gentle shadow flung o'er fiery youth,  
A bridle to rein in the wayward speed  
Of folly in the headlong race of time.

‘One also well I knew, who passed away  
In full maturity of womanhood,  
With fourscore autumns sitting gently on her,  
And giving out their mingled light and shade,  
Like laden fruit-branch of the mellowest hue,  
In some old orchard when the sun is low.  
Meek with no common meekness, self-denied,  
Mindful of all around, she walked in light,  
A stranger here, her fellowships above ;  
Mother of children who rise up to bless her,  
And to tread softly in her steps of peace.  
My spirit clung to her, and in the night

Or shaded nook of life still found in her,  
When other lights went out or were obscured,  
An inextinguishable joy; as yon clear star  
Of the deep sky, the star that never sets,  
Midnight's lone darling, so was she to me.

‘And three I knew, caught from our circle here  
Ere the long shadows fell on them, or age  
Had stolen their strength or made their fragile forms  
More fragile: wise and kind and ever true,  
Yet hidden, like the silent, shaded pool  
Of some sweet streamlet, from the gaze of man.  
They stole thro’ life with such a quiet grace,  
That no one knew how much had gone from us  
Until we missed them, and began to measure  
The blank which had been made in home and heart.

‘Him too can I forget, a second father,  
Who, when the hand paternal was unclasped  
By death, took up the hands of tender boyhood,  
And led us on in goodness and in truth?  
Self-difflident, yet able, above most,  
To take a higher place for worth and wisdom;  
Studious, as one who loved to dwell among  
The stores of other days and other men,  
Yet glad to share his wealth, and to distribute  
To all around the knowledge he had stored.  
Like and yet unlike each of those around,  
Links of a golden chain we were; and he  
Knit us together, and we walked in love,  
Leaning and leaned upon, our sympathies  
Embracing a long past of ancestry.  
Of fathers and of fathers’ fathers, we

Were undivided parts ; for are we not  
Made up of bits of all our ancestors ?  
In us they meet, and are in us, or more  
Or less, all imaged and all reproduced.  
I have the memory of a calm, bright day,  
One of youth's holidays, long since gone by,  
Half-summer and half-autumn. Sky and earth  
Were passing beautiful ; and the bland air,  
Sweet with the spoil of the red clover-bloom,  
And proud of robbery that made it rich,  
Yet left none poorer, breathed in softness by.  
The face of ocean, by whose side we walked,  
Sheeted all over with broad-hammered gold,  
Shone in the glow of noon : we loitered on,  
Mile after mile, upon the grassy bent  
Or yielding sand, chasing the slender wave  
As it went back into its parent-sea,  
Or with light foot retreating from its flow,  
As it returned and swept the sloping strand ;  
Sending with oft unskilful hand the shell  
Across its level face, and making count  
Of each successive bound along the wave.  
We strolled, or stood, or lingered ; meanwhile he,  
Our teacher, drew us on to hear and learn.  
Too short these noons ; too quickly fled these days ;  
Only the memory abiding still,—  
The scene all changed. The sand, the rock, the cave ;  
The small ravine down which the rillet poured ;  
The grassy slopes, with sea-pink studded o'er ;  
The shell, the shingle, and the bald bluff rock,  
Where oft we stood to hook the swarming fry,—

All gone ; swept over by the iron wheels  
And iron pathways of this iron age,—  
Age of the new, contemptuous of the old ;  
Age of the present, thankless of the past ;  
That buries out of sight her noblest dead,  
Or builds their monuments, or writes their names  
Upon the tombstone, that she may forget  
The men themselves, and the great words they spoke.

‘One too I knew, cut down in happy girlhood  
(Her woman’s love and sweetness buried with her) ;  
All brightness on her brow and in her eye,  
And in the waving tresses which flowed down  
Like sunshine on her bosom, or flew back  
Upon the breeze, as, with elastic step,  
She headed her fair compeers in their sport,  
Or climbed the cliff, or plucked the July rose.  
She sprung, then drooped, for the keen winter smote her ;  
The scorpion east wind struck the tender bud  
Of the half-wakened spring : the blossom died,  
And all its fragrance with it ; all the love  
Remained unspoken ; all the promise high  
Of life’s ripe fruitage withered in an hour.  
'Twas a calm July morning when she left us,  
And with sad hands we closed her tearless eyes,—  
Truth-speaking eyes of girlhood, o'er whose blue  
Guile had not drawn its dimness, and on which  
But one deep grief was written, when the light  
Of her young soul, the blue-eyed fair-haired boy,  
Child of her love and brother of her heart,  
Went out and was extinguished as a star,  
That rises but to set and disappear.

‘ I’ve looked upon the face of coffined childhood :  
Would that I ne’er may look on it again !  
She who lay shrouded there had been our joy :  
How much we loved her, how we wept, when death,  
The coward spoiler, stole from us our pearl  
And left us but the shell, I need not say.  
The tears are dried, long dried, nor do I wish  
That they again should flow ; let it suffice  
That they flowed once, and would not be restrained.  
The wound is cicatrized, the pain is dulled,  
And the sharp edge of grief is blunted now,  
But can we e’er forget our child of love ?—  
Her low voice softer than the plaintive note  
Of the Zenaida dove, as it sweeps o’er  
The sands of Florida, and melts the heart  
Of the rough pirate. Or can I forget  
The pleasant love that, like an angel, spoke  
From the bright motion of her clear blue eye,  
And the quick twinkle of her laughing lip,  
Sparkling with childhood’s eagerness of joy ?

‘ O stars that never set, whose beams on high  
Are a perpetual gladness, shining on  
Without eclipse or dimness ; into whose  
Far-sweeping orbits, as ye march thro’ space,  
Death and its shadow, sickness, come not ; hills  
Upon whose peaks only the morning dwells ;  
Fields of eternal fragrance ; fountains clear,  
That well out immortality and joy ;  
Sea of the undefiled, whose waves are light ;  
Streams of the sorrowless, whose placid flow  
Is health and mildness ; with no icy breeze,

No scourging east-wind, how I long for you !  
The voyage has been rough ; the vessel rocks,  
And plunges thro' the brine ; the timbers creak ;  
The strong masts bend ; o'er us the billows rush ;  
Strained is the cordage ; every sail is rent ;  
On every side go down the reeling barques :  
Yet we move onward, onward, onward still ;  
The beacon-light before us, and beyond  
Its light, the haven, and beyond the haven,  
The land without the tempest and the wave,  
The fields without the curse, or sign of death,  
The city of the song that never dies.  
Here we lie listening, while the organ's skill  
Weaves the smooth texture of the pliant air  
Into a web of many-coloured song.  
But the notes die in discord, and the song  
Is ended, or in dirges passes down  
To a heartbreaking sadness that awakes  
The cry of oft-defeated hope, *How long ?*  
When shall the harps of heaven wake up the hymns  
In which no exile's wail shall find a place ?  
When shall the gathered hosts of the redeemed,  
Of every clime and every tongue, begin  
The home-bright minstrelsy, in which shall join  
The long-hushed voices, which while here, so oft,  
Tho' with imperfect skill and faltering lips,  
Took up in days of earthly weariness  
The words prepared afore for the great host  
Of the unnumbered and the undefiled,  
Assembled on the everlasting hills ?

‘ O wind, O twilight wind, so pale and calm,

Bring back the voices thou hast borne away,  
And pour their love once more into my soul !  
I know they never can be what they were :  
The soul has fled, the more than fragrant breath  
That bore their love to us has died away.  
I dig into the tomb, and find but bones ;  
The eye is gone, and the delicious light  
That flashed out from beneath its eyelids once  
Is quenched. I might, perchance, re-light a star,  
But the dear starlight of a loving eye  
Comes back no more ; for, once, and only once,  
Such living gladnesses come up ; they may  
Have a fair offspring, but themselves return not  
From the deep tomb to which they have gone down.  
They print their image and then pass away.  
There may be many harps, all sweet in tone,  
But the lost lyre of Orpheus sounds no more.  
New bards may yet arise, but only one  
Sings of the Paradise that once was lost.  
There may be dreams and dreamers yet to come,  
But the great pilgrim-dreamer dreams no more.  
There may be Marathons in future days,  
But the great Marathon is past ; the thought  
Linked with that battle-field can never be  
Linked with another. Nothing repeats itself,  
Nor can ; the past can never be the present,  
Nor can the future borrow from the past :  
Each age does its own work, then passes off,  
Leaving the next to do its destined work  
For man and for man's earth, for good or ill.'

‘I see them all ;’—thus writes a trembling pen,  
Long since laid down, once used so oft and well  
To send the word of cheer, the cordial greeting,  
The homely news, the mirthful or the grave,  
Or deeper thoughts of peace and truth, to hearts  
That waited for the welcome messenger ;—  
‘I see them all,—a goodly band they form,  
The true and trusted ones of earlier days,  
Over whose graves we wept no hopeless tears,—  
Land safely, one by one, upon that shore  
Where the dead live, and where the sleepers wake,  
Where the closed eye reopens and relumes,  
Purged from this mortal film of earth and sense,  
Which hid from it the immortal. I am left  
Behind them all upon a broken barque,  
Out on a surging sea, whose next high wave  
Will fling me on the strand. Yet I am glad ;  
They,—they are safe. It was a strong-limbed vessel,  
Fitted to breast the billow, and it held  
One happy family, our faces turned  
All homeward. Suddenly the sky grew sad,  
The swift storm smote us, and the big, broad waves  
Burst heavily across, sweeping away  
One and another and another still.  
I stood and gazed. I could not help nor follow ;  
I could but watch and see them one by one,—  
The infant, with his fair and glossy curls,  
Like the blanched sea-weed floating thro’ the foam ;  
The fond one passing into womanhood,  
With her pale cheek and forehead marble-pure,  
Thro’ the cold breakers struggling. How I stretched

My eager hands ; but till my time arrived  
I could not follow. I saw each in safety  
Land on the seaboard of an endless home.  
The partings were like swords within my soul,  
But the bright eyes, as each one reached the shore,  
And leaped among the flowers, and looking back  
To the still struggling vessel, waved the hand  
In triumph, beckoning me to follow soon,  
Spoke gladness, and dried up the dropping tears.  
I was so soon to follow,—they were safe !  
No peril more for them ; and the dear day  
Of the home-meeting was at hand. I knew it,—  
I knew it, and I said Amen, tho' left  
Almost alone to fill up what remained  
Of life, till I should plunge into the wave  
And reach the loved ones landed long before.

‘ Not with the blithe buds of the bursting spring ;  
Not with the roses of the sun-loved June ;  
Not with the brown of Autumn’s dusky leaves,  
Sown broadcast by October’s frosty wind ;—  
My chequered life-path has been strangely strewn.  
Not by the margin of the burnished stream,  
Whose jocund ripples speak perpetual mirth,  
And where the velvet verdure springs unbidden  
On footpaths of the rush-embroidered brook,  
That winds and circles on its sportive way,  
Sending up joy into the hazel boughs  
That root their freshness in its mossy stones.  
But by the sharp edge of the sea-vexed cliff,  
Beneath which, on the barren slope, are spread

The broken relics of a hundred storms.  
Not thro' Hesperian gardens, or fair groves  
Of Syrian olives, has my journey been,  
But o'er the moorland, where the shining furze,  
Shunned by the bee, waves fruitless; where the breeze  
Wounds while it braces,—bids the traveller  
Look to his steps and gird his loosened loins.

‘Some lives have ever been upon the edge  
Of evil, yet have missed it; the keen bolt  
Has struck on this side and on that, yet left  
Them all untouched; my life has been upon  
The margin of the prosperous, yet my feet  
Have seldom crossed the line. I have gone round  
The sunny lake, yet found no skiff in which  
I might embark, to revel in the gleams.

‘Yet 'twas not evil that thus threw its shade  
Above me; it was good, tho' shaped like evil,  
And speaking with its voice: it seemed to me  
A cruel stranger, yet I found that I  
Had entertained an angel unawares.  
The evil came unasked; shall not the good  
Come in still larger measure, when the cry  
Of the sore spirit has gone up to God?  
Does the Creator hate His handiwork,  
Or does the Blessed One not love to bless,  
And is the Son of God not pitiful?  
Are not the worst things that befall us here,  
That seem devoid of meaning, or contain  
The least of love and beauty, those from which  
The heavenly Alchemist extracts the gold  
That makes us rich? Are they not those from which

He brings the plastic influence which moulds  
And tones our being? Shall we grudge the pain  
Of the mysterious process, or recoil  
In anger from the blessed hand that blest us?  
Break thou these bonds, I said, and I shall soar  
Above those bright, bewildering snares of youth.  
He took me at my word; he smote my gods,  
And for the ease which I had looked for, gave  
The thorn and sackcloth of adversity.  
The cords were cut, and yet I did not rise;  
The ballast was flung out, but all in vain;  
I needed more than the mere broken chain.  
Earthward my spirit tended, and I needed  
The buoyancy of an indwelling power,  
To lift me to the heavens; without that strength,  
That new elastic energy of soul,  
All failure is but shipwreck, in whose shock  
The vessel goes to pieces, and her freight  
Of all things goodly sinks without a hope,  
Dragged down in fragments to the silent gloom  
Of ocean's everlasting solitudes,  
Without a monument or history.

‘How often in the conflict of the soul,  
When deep was calling unto deep, and all  
Thy heavy waves were going over me,  
Has the rebellious spirit spoken out,  
And sought to call in other comforters,  
That could administer no healing balm!  
O time and change, I said, rub off and blunt  
With your subduing touch the edges keen  
Of this pervading ache, which still returns

Hour after hour with the fresh bitterness  
Of a new sting, as if the poisoned shaft  
Were still embedded in the fiery wound.  
Yet how shall time do that, if God withhold  
His touch divine of comfort and of health ?  
Or how shall change assuage the throbbing pain,  
If the celestial anodyne have failed ?  
Were time (again I said) to soothe me ere  
The discipline divine were perfected,  
And the ripe end were gained, then should I not  
Lose the vast blessing thus in store for me ?

‘Yet would I say, as I have spoken oft,  
To Him who knoweth all my ways and wants,—  
“Into the blessed sunshine, Father, lead me !  
Too long, it seems to me, my life has been  
The shade and frost ; my being seems to droop,  
Benumbed, beneath too long a weariness.  
Lighten this load at last, and swallow up  
This lower sorrow in Thy higher joy !”

‘Yet do I know myself ? Or shall I tell  
The sculptor where and how to use his chisel ?  
Does he not know the marble he has chosen,  
And has he not the mould before his eye ?  
May not the work be further on than I  
In ignorance imagine ? Could I see  
What he sees, in the light of his own day,  
Might I not wonder and rejoice, as each  
Feature and line and shade of my old being  
Has vanished, and the new is rising up ?  
Far more is wrought in us than now we know ;  
And what we know not now, we shall hereafter,

When day has burst and shadows fled away.  
Morn comes, and beauty comes to earth each day,  
Revealing wonders to the enamoured eye  
That gazes from afar ; yet morn creates  
Not one new object for the gazer's vision.  
It shows but what was lying there before ;  
It draws aside the curtain, and, as from  
Some mystic fount of molten gold, it pours  
Soft splendour over earth, and lighteth up  
Its fair pure face, still pale, and moistened o'er  
With night's cold tears. Sun of the mighty dawn,  
When wilt thou wake, and to our waiting east  
Bring thy warm radiance, and reveal the grace  
Long latent here beneath the veil of night ?

‘ The waves are many, but the sea is one ;  
The rays are many, but the sun is one.  
O oneness of this royal universe,  
With all thy stars and suns that float upon  
The double stream of endless space and time,  
But find no ocean into which to pour  
Themselves and rest ! Thou oneness manifold,  
Speak out to us of Him from whom thou camest,  
Whose boundless wisdom filleth all in all,  
Unerring, unconfused, unfailing still,  
Thro' all the never-straightening labyrinths  
Of force and motion and resistless change !

‘ I muse upon the genesis of time,  
Written by Him who gave to time its birth,  
In the one record out of which we gather  
The long and varied story of this earth.  
There the beginning pointeth to the end,

And there the end points back to the beginning ;  
Strange history midway, like sudden night,  
Or like a dread eclipse, that maketh day  
The more to be desired. For first and last,  
Light irrepressible, tho' shaded oft,  
Like a rich clasp of gold has knit the volume  
Within which lie the immortal gems of thought,  
That never shall grow dim or be dissolved.  
Bright the beginning, and as bright the end,  
With many a change between of shade and sun.'

‘Earth’s annals have not yet been written out,  
As they shall one day be ;’—so read I here,  
In this exploring page, which speaks to me  
With the articulate voice of one who had  
Read and re-read the story of our world,  
Unravelled its perplexities, and tried  
To fathom its deceptions.—‘In the fight,  
The soldier knows not how the battle goes ;  
The miner with his feeble lamp sees nought  
Beyond the swing of his small pickaxe, nor  
Fathoms the veins that lie on every side ;  
The lark, however high he soareth, cannot  
Measure the ridges of the clover field  
In which his nest lies hidden from the eye.

‘He only comprehends earth’s history  
Who knows to take the measure of events,  
Or good or ill, by superhuman rule.  
He only writes her pregnant annals truly  
Who comprehends the great eternal purpose ;  
Who has, however dimly, seen the end

Of these sad ages of permitted wrong,  
Of this hard conflict between ill and good ;  
Who has, but with no human plummet-line,  
Sounded the soul's abyss, and understood  
How from one drop of that which God calls sin  
Has issued forth the universal flood  
Of woe and war, of passion and of hate,  
Of blood and torture and of broken hearts,  
Of lust and pride, ambition and revenge ;  
Who has, but with no human light, surveyed  
The wanderings of the race amid the gloom  
And thickets of this sin-bewildered earth ;  
Who, by the light of the one lamp which hangs  
Upon the cross of Golgotha, has turned  
His own once-erring steps into the way  
That leads to the great life beyond this death.

‘ Each story of a soul is great ; but who  
Shall write it, for who knows what makes the greatness ?

Or who can sift it, and bring out the grain,  
Winnowed and clean from the concealing chaff ?  
Who can the dross dissever from the gold ?  
Who estimate the little or the great  
Even in one human word ? Or who shake out  
The folded feelings of a human heart ?  
Or who unwind the one hour's ravelled thoughts  
Of one poor mind even in its idlest day ?

‘ The balances of man are all untrue ;  
His weights and eyes deceitful. He may write  
The story of a pebble or a rock,  
The annals of a beetle or a worm ;

But the great story of his own vast being,  
The hills and valleys of his life, he cannot ;  
A life made up of but a few short years,  
And yet containing in its troubled round  
Tempests and tides and changes, failures, conquests,  
In daily flux and reflux without end.

‘ Deep in the facts of time the thoughts of God  
Are found embedded, like the golden ore  
Within the rocks, or like the flower within  
The unsightly seed ; no fact but has a meaning  
Worthy of Him who shaped it, or allowed  
It to be shapen into what it is,—  
The good, the excellence which to Himself  
Belongs ; the evil, that which in the creature still  
Inheres, by its own law of creaturehood ;  
And each event of earthly history,  
Each movement of creation’s smallest atoms,  
Wraps up or manifests some thought or truth,  
Greater or smaller ; none is wholly barren.  
He who best reads these is the man of thought ;  
He who misreads, or reads them not at all,  
Treads under foot alike both pearl and shell.  
Round one small fact,—a child’s poor birth of old,  
In a mean village,—all earth’s history  
Revolves, and shall revolve for evermore,  
As round the Pleiad star the universe.  
From the low manger-crib, where heaven met earth,  
And where the eternal link was knit between them,  
Like a betrothment, plighting faith and love,  
There has burst forth a radiance that has filled  
All space to its extreme, and yet shall fill

All time, each far-illuminating ray  
An emanation from that village scene,—  
That scene a fragment of earth's history,  
So like the rest, that but a few, whose eyes  
Could penetrate beneath its homely surface,  
Read aught in it beyond a common birth,—  
A Hebrew mother, and a Hebrew child.

‘ If God be love, should not this world have been  
More beautiful by far than now we see it ?  
So the fool reasons ; and the wise are dumb,  
Afraid to answer, and ashamed to tell  
What sin has done with that which God made good.

‘ Deserts, where are ye ?—There are none on earth,  
Nor throughout God's dominions. Man calls that  
A desert from which he himself is absent ;  
Yet scenes and places which contain the least  
Of man may hold in them the most of God ;  
For the great fulness filleth all in all.  
Man may be far from you, ye solitudes,  
When silence sits on every rock and tree,  
And the broad sands are dumb ; but God is near.  
He fills you like the universal air.  
His steps are everywhere ; their speechless sound  
Echoes from cliff to cliff. His voice comes down  
From the tall peak, and spreads along the wild,  
Or wakes the palm to music ; while the moon,  
Spell-bound above this wide majestic waste,  
Bends over the vast plain, and sings of Him  
In whom we live and move and have our being,  
The song that without words speaks out His praise ;  
The silken sunbeams, winking thro' the leaves

Of the acacia's summer-loving boughs,  
Writes on the silent sand-waste, GOD IS LOVE.

'There are no solitudes in earth or heaven ;  
Fulness and speech and sweet society  
Are everywhere, except where God is not.  
All earth is populous, and the still air  
Has its bright companies, whose fellowships  
Greet us and gladden us on every side.  
There are no solitudes in history ;  
Fulness is everywhere throughout the ages,  
That make up the slow lifetime of our race ;  
No sterile moorlands in these plains or uplands  
Of the long centuries that lie behind us.  
No lips are dumb throughout the peopled past ;  
No voice but has a music of its own ;  
No mute unconscious statue which has nought  
To say to those who gaze upon its marble.  
O history of man, thy wondrous volumes,  
Or written now, or to be writ hereafter,  
Contain in them immortal truth, or dark  
Or bright, as each new phase of being must,  
In creatures God has made ; such is the greatness  
That cleaveth to the weakest and the worst  
Atom of creaturehood. Each thing below  
Is eloquent : not sun, nor moon, nor star  
Alone in their majestic brightness ; nor  
Seas, rivers, forests in their loveliness ;  
But each small fragment of a human life,  
The life of childhood or of poverty,  
Too mean for man to notice or record,  
Speaks with as true an utterance, and contains

A deeper wisdom and a loftier power.  
No commonness nor littleness belongs  
To aught that claims an everlasting future,—  
Endless capacity for grief or joy,  
Relationship to the Eternal All.

‘Hills of the royal earth, that stretch to heaven  
Like ruins of a yet more royal world,  
Once fair, but now o’erthrown and desolate,  
Whose giant relics cover this green round ;—  
Or first-growths of a wondrous world to come,  
When the dark deluge of unfathomed evil  
Shall be rolled off the surface of our globe,  
And the long-hidden grandeurs reappear,  
Fairer and nobler far than eye hath seen!  
Hills of the sacred earth, designed by Him  
Who drew it from the void and called it good,  
To be the dwelling-place of holy men ;  
Mysterious peaks, muffled in silver mist,  
Or sheathed in golden sunshine ; robed in snow  
As with a priestly stole, or wreathed with green,  
Each with his own star-broidered diadem  
Set on his forehead by no earthly hand ;—  
Wild ridges of the Syrian Libanus ;  
Helvetian Jungfrau ; Ida of old Troy,  
That gazes on the gleaming Hellespont,  
Mother of fountains and heroic streams ;  
Or tall Olympus, at whose verdant feet  
Sweet Tempe slumbers in her loveliness,  
Reputed haunt of fabled deities ;  
Asian Hemodus, looking down afar,  
As from a thousand watch-towers, on the plains

Of India, with all their princely state ;—  
Each, to his summit, every inch a king.

‘ And yet with all your greatness, cliffs of earth,  
Mountains of west or east, that lonely hut  
That roots itself upon your lowest slope,  
And which your pines or boulders almost bury,  
Contains a nobler piece of heavenly skill,  
A truer revelation of the godlike,  
Than can be seen in you. That human life,  
Or fragment of it, that is lived beneath  
Yon lowly roof, has in it more of grandeur,  
Wraps up within it more of lofty truth,  
In one hour of its common history,  
Than many thousand peaks of noblest Alp  
Or Apennine, on which we gaze and gaze,  
As on the vastest of the works of God.’

‘ You know my life, a plain and common one ’  
(Writes the old college friend who crossed the threshold  
Of learning’s ancient porch along with me) ;  
‘ No matter of romance, for tale or song,  
Does it contain ; a placid journey mine,  
With but a shade or two reminding me  
That night is on its way to me, and that  
Beyond the night is day. I cannot tell  
Of wrecking tempests and of sinking barques,  
Of the swollen river to be crossed when darkness,  
With all its added fears, came down on us,  
Making the bravest shrink. My feet have trod  
A smoother path than most ; and as I look  
Back on its pleasant windings, day by day,

I wonder how I should have stolen along  
So tranquilly, as if between the storms  
Which on the right and left went roaring by.

‘Sweet silver childhood, like a May-day song,  
Gave out its melody and died in joy,  
Yet left behind it life-long chimes of love,  
To soothe and sweeten all my after years,  
And with their echoes to reverberate  
Thro’ every chamber of my listening soul,  
Till the last shadow falls upon the brow,  
And memory succumbs to palsied age.  
Immortal dreams of childhood! How I love  
To wander back with still elastic step  
Amid the fragrance of your morning flowers,  
To breathe again your soft delicious air,  
To mark the present mingling with the past,  
Like gold on which a star is shining, or  
Like the sea’s myriad drops, exhaled on high,  
Returning to their fountains on the hills.

‘Yet in these dreams the land beyond the dream  
Dimly revealed itself. I caught the outline,  
Tho’ but in glimpses, of its loveliness,  
And took possession in my childish heart  
Of the eternal heritage, as if  
I were already there. I heard the voice  
Which spoke on earth as never man had done,  
All wisdom and all tenderness; I said,  
Did He not mean *me* when He spoke the words  
Of grace and welcome from His human lips?  
Or would He in His large and lowly love  
Repel me, when I took His hand and asked

That He should lead me thro' the mists of earth  
To His own city, where the holy dwell?

‘Boyhood came up, and with it also came  
New eyes and ears, to look and hear and know,—  
More serious eyes and ears, tho’ not less glad.  
The soul was growing, and the thoughts went out  
With graver earnestness to things beyond  
The fairy landscape of our younger days.  
The airy views of childhood now dissolved  
In visions wider, fuller than the child  
Had dreamed of in his most fantastic moods.  
Life’s low horizon raised its curve, and grew  
Larger and more capacious, falling back,  
And leaving in the foreground ampler space  
For action, and for fancy, and for joy.  
The daisies vanished, and the roses came;  
The blossom fell, and the rich fruit began  
To peer out from the crevices in which  
It had been hidden by the tinted bloom.  
My feet sought loftier scope; my steps disdained  
The common level of the garden walk,  
Which up till then had been my more than Tempe.  
They climbed the cliff; they swept along the moor.  
The bee and butterfly were now forgot;  
The lark bewitched me with his dewy wing,  
And voice that sung of sunrise and of heaven,  
As, like a wingèd gem, he hung above  
His low nest curtained round with clover bloom,  
Where all night long he dreamed of dew and flowers.  
The sea-bird swung across the whitened deep,  
Or dived for prey beneath its populous wave,

Nor envied the white plumage of the breaker,  
Rejoicing in the purer snow that tipped  
Her silver crest, or sheathed her shining neck.  
The bounding spaniel breasted the red stream ;  
The mountain goats toiled up their slippery way  
To the sharp summit of the naked peak,  
Wondering that I should follow to a crag  
Which only they and the strong eagle knew.  
Wild cliffs of childhood, what a joy of spirit  
Were ye, in your old grandeur, when we stood  
On your bold height to mark the rounded earth,  
Or watch the sparkle of the distant sail,  
Or take the measure of the ample sea,  
Longing to plunge in the majestic clouds  
That hung upon its frontier ! Here we sat,  
And sung our jubilate to the winds,  
Our hymn of morning as the morning rose,  
And claimed for God the first song of the day,  
While far beneath us slept the sea of dawn :  
Or, leaning o'er the rock when woke the storm,  
We watched with ear and eye the ascending surge,  
Breaking beneath, in thunder 'gainst the wall  
Of the wave-chiselled precipice, and smiting  
With fruitless vehemence the jutting rounds  
Or sharp-receding hollows of the cliff,  
Which gave back every stroke, and sent aloft  
Their swelling tumult, like the echoing blows  
Upon the boss of Odin's shield, or sound  
That filled fair Goldau, when adown its slopes,  
With its huge avalanche of woods and rocks,  
The Rossberg rushed into the fields below :

Or, in the purple summer evening, lay  
Watching the universal lamp of earth  
Go down in the far plain of the flushed sea,  
Where sky, and cloud, and wave were locked within  
Each other, as if woven into one ;  
Spreading its changeful radiance under it  
Like miles of beaten gold, or like the sparks  
From the half-molten iron on the anvil,  
When the high hammer-stroke comes heaving down.

‘The moorland, too, in its waste loneliness,  
That gem of untilled nature, relic rare  
Of the uncivilised, untutored earth,  
Level, or heaving with a thousand swells,  
Was ever fair to me, and wonderful.  
It won my heart, and with its varied vastness  
Drew my free footsteps mile on mile to roam,  
‘Mid its bewitching pathlessness of heath,  
O’er which the spotted moorfowl hurries on,  
And where the ladybird and dragon-fly  
In many-coloured beauty ply their wings,  
Not without music of their own, to break  
The drowsy whisper of the wilderness ;  
When shade and light, in their still ebb and flow,  
Softening or brightening the motley hues  
Of straggling shrub or ever-verdant moss,  
Or wild-flowers by the edge of rushy pool,  
Moved over all and made perpetual change.

‘Dear willows of the brook, old summer friends,  
Dropping your tresses o’er the welcome wave,  
And stretching over it your ancient boughs !  
How often have I sat beneath your shade,

To rest, and dream, and hear the pleasant song,  
At noon, of eddy or low waterfall !

‘I know, too,—for I’ve seen and shared it all,—  
The keen unshaded fervour of high noon  
Upon that ruddy plain, or level flush  
Of more than earthly glow, when the low sun  
Sinks o’er that stretch of moorland, when the heath  
Is all in harvest-blossom, sky and earth  
Mingling their purple ; all the Occident  
Festooned with sunshine, hung upon the wreaths  
Of many-folded clouds. There, too, I’ve seen  
Night’s placid grandeur, when the rounded moon,  
Like a cold statue newly sculptured, rises  
In virgin beauty on the dusky waste ;  
Or when the starlight with its diamond rain,  
As with a spell, revives the weary flowers.  
I’ve seen the night departing ;—swiftly, softly,  
It shakes its sable pinions and is gone !  
The red dawn breaks like an inflowing tide,  
And fills with luminous ripples all the space  
Between these island-orbs that float above,  
Till, in the advancing waters of a light  
Far brighter than their own, their beams are buried.

‘A storm is on the moor ! The boy is there,  
Delighting in the tumult of the scene.  
It is the tempest’s chosen battle-field ;  
Not even the ocean wilder or more gloomy.  
The heath is surging into ruddy waves,  
Swayed to and fro by the remorseless gale,  
Yet un-uprooted even by the strokes  
That snap the birch or tear up the tall fir.

The gorse, too slender to resist or break,  
Bending and rising with its feathery bloom,  
Waves its rich gold, like banners of a host  
Gaily equipped and marching to the war.  
The wild knoll grows still wilder, as if rocked  
Down to its base by the all-scourging wind,  
And shadowed by the dark clouds overhead,  
Which rain their fury on the passive plain,  
And scoop sharp runnels upon every slope.  
It waits till the fierce foe has spent his rage,  
And, with no wreck upon its unscarred face,  
No relic of the gale save freshened beauty,  
Shines out again as if no storm had swept it.

‘Boyhood soon dreamed itself away ; too soon !  
I wished it, yet I wished it not, to go.  
Go, said I, go, but come again ; and when  
Thou goest, take not all thy sunshine with thee ;  
I cannot part with thy fair morning glow.  
Take not thy music with thee when thou bidst  
Farewell, but pass it on to manhood, and  
Let youth and manhood clasp each other’s hands,  
And move along abreast. It might not be :  
I could not have both noon and morn in one ;  
For life divides itself, and rivers deep  
Sunder its rugged continents. Stern days  
And sterner studies came ; still life was fair.  
There was a joy in everything, and peace,  
Like a perpetual lamp, not of this earth,  
Shone in my heart, and lighted up my steps.  
The clouds that oft hung heavily around,  
And gathered up within their bulky folds

The storms that break the calm of human hearts,  
And wreck the goodliest and most full of hope,  
Went past me, leaving not one broken flower.

‘ By the deep well of knowledge, softly fringed  
With the green moss of ages, I sat down ;  
I looked into its depths, and stooped and drank ;  
All love, divine and human, seemed within  
My reach. Each draught refreshed me, and I drank  
Again, and still again. I could not stay,  
For in the cup with which I drew the treasure  
From the clear fount, seemed magic, and the water,  
With which it sparkled, quickened every part  
Of my awakening spirit ; and I felt,  
With each new draught, new vigour and new life  
Perfusing me, and lifting up my soul.  
To know seemed only worth the living for,  
And not to know was like a living death.

‘ All life seemed changing ; my whole being wokc,  
And looked round on a world which hitherto  
Had seemed what it was not, or had not seemed  
What it in essence was. All faces changed,  
All sounds and scenes ; the change within myself  
Altered each thing without me, giving depth  
Of meaning to the meaningless ; with music  
Filling up that which seemed unmusical ;  
Transforming into venerable softness  
Words which, when uttered first, perchance seemed  
rude ;  
Making even silence eloquent ; the sweet  
Still sweetening ; the waves of stormy life  
Smoothing into a bright and solemn calm.

‘Thus passed the day of discipline and growth :  
Leaf, bud, and blossom came and disappeared ;  
The bubbling fountain welled, and rose, and sunk.  
I learned from failure. My successful plans  
Were built on ruins, or it might be ashes,—  
My own or others ; daily teaching came,  
And daily did I welcome it. I knew  
Blind error sometimes hath a seeing son ;  
The rough, dark seed brings forth the fruitful tree ;  
And the best things are the most deeply hid,  
Like pearls beneath the breaker’s restless foam.

‘Let me, my friend, then, ere I close this page,  
And bid thee, as in duty bound, good-night,  
Write down for thee some parting thoughts, which I  
Have gathered in my pilgrimage, and which  
Perchance may teach thee something that will last.

‘Live well, for thou shalt not live long ; not broad,  
Tho’ deep, is life’s inevitable stream.  
Gather up wisdom as you gather gold :  
Buy it, but sell it not ; seek till you find.  
Yet hoard not, like the miser ; freely give,  
And in your giving double all your store.  
The wise learn slowly ; at a single bound,  
Fools, clearing every fence, move o’er the field,  
And at the end are just as at the first.  
Thrust in your sickle everywhere ; glean well,  
And glean in every field. Count none too poor  
Or too unlikely for your toil. They say  
Children and fools are prophets, and that God  
Supplies from His own wisdom what in them  
Is lacking of the full and mellow culture ;

Even as He feeds the ravens, and instructs  
The wren to build a nest which man in vain  
May try to imitate. It may be so ;  
I know not ; but I know that from each thing  
That lives or moves or is, even man may learn  
Much of high wisdom, which if he despise,  
He shall be poorer ; something which he can  
Get nowhere else than from the slighted lip  
Of fool or child. Yet waste no strength on trifles ;  
The lion hunts not ants, nor eagles flies.  
Aim high, tho' not in pride, nor to o'erstep  
Your fellows here ; the higher that you soar,  
Be thou the lowlier, for as you rise and rise,  
The purer is the air, the wider is  
The horizon, and the clouds are all beneath.  
Make haste ; the loiterer loses many a scene,  
Which all the flowers he gathers cannot equal.  
Life is half-spent before we know its worth.  
Be calm, tho' earnest ; hold the bridle firm  
Of fancy and of passion ; do not say  
That only little souls and hearts are still.  
Great is the sea, yet with its mighty waves  
It can sink down to gentleness and love.  
All violence of speech or deed is evil ;  
'Tis weakness and not strength to them who use it.  
Dispute but sparingly ; the warmth of words  
Warps judgment, blunts the conscience, leads aside  
Into one-eyed, one-sided bitterness.  
In over-eagerness the archer oft  
Misses the mark, and wounds both peace and love.  
In much debating, truth itself is lost,

And work is left undone. The seamen quarrel,  
And the ship drifts upon an iron shore :  
The shepherds fight, and straightway comes the wolf  
To snatch an easy prey from folds unwatched.

“Error is breadth,”—so runs the creed of  
progress;

Error is straitness, and must ever be,  
If God Himself, the Infinite, be TRUTH.

No error, bold soever let it be,  
Ever enlarged or purified the soul.

Shun most the impure poet, who defiles  
His God-given power of song, and vomits forth  
His filth upon mankind, and leaves the world  
Uncleaner than he found it. Rather far  
Would I, like Egypt’s ancient sons, bow down  
To leek, or crocodile, or sacred bull,  
Or ibis of the plain, lone perched amid  
The shallows of the melancholy Nile,  
Than give my homage to the human brute  
That fills his song with oaths and lust and wine.  
From the pure air distils the heavy dew ;  
From the bright petals of the brightest flowers  
The poison comes ; so from the book of truth  
The error that destroys is sucked by man.  
In strife, if strife must be, he suffers least  
Who bridles well his lips, or steeps his pen  
In charity. It is the loving who are strong.  
The great are always pitiful ; the true  
Are tender-hearted, easy to be won.  
The blessed of the Blessed One is not  
The conqueror ; no,—but the peacemaker, he

Who knows that sword-wounds may be healed, but  
hardly

Those of the tongue, the poison is so deadly.

‘ It is for peace that arms are forged, not war;  
And one sword keeps the other in its sheath.

Unstring the bow, shiver the spear in pieces,—

Will human passion die, or pride give way?

Will the lie perish, and the truth be king?

Will lust of power, or gain, or glory cease

When armies are disbanded, when the flag

That waved its colours over them is rent,

And the war-trumpet sounds the charge no more,

And the war-steed goes home to plough the soil?

Man’s heart is the great arsenal of war;

New-mould it, purge it, and then all is peace;

Till then in vain you blame the sword and shield.

The strong are few, the feeble everywhere;

The passive power of weakness rules the world,

By numbers bridling and controlling strength;

And weakness is not wisdom, tho’ it oft

Has counterchecked what wisdom would have done.

‘ Heaven’s ever-moving universal lamp

Will do for all, man’s torch for barely one.

One word divine is light for evermore;

The many words of man go out in darkness,

Like sparks of molten iron on the anvil,

Or firefly’s gleam, which, though it twinkle bright,

Is yet no sun to light the traveller.

The arrow shot, the stone flung from the sling,

Return not; so the sentence from the lips,

Once sent, can never be recalled; ’tis gone,

To wander onward thro' eternity.  
Thy secret is thy prisoner, says the proverb ;  
But let it go, tho' but a foot beyond thee,  
And straightway thou art prisoner to it.  
He who has enemies must not go to sleep ;  
And foes are round us in this world of sin,—  
One foe above the rest, who sleepeth not ;  
Watch on thy knees against that foe of foes.  
Often behind the cross that evil one  
Lurketh, all unsuspected and unseen,  
And from beneath its shade throws out his snares,  
Or shoots the deadliest of his deadly darts.  
Put on the armour and defy the foe ;  
For armour better than Pelides wore  
Lies at thy side,—the armour forged in heaven.  
Then, tempter, ply thy darts ; they pierce me not !

‘ Be stable ; play no double game, or with  
Thyself or others ; trifle not with truth,  
Or honesty, or conscience. Ah ! how soon  
Do we forget what we have been and done,  
And, as convenience asks, reverse ourselves  
Like the ignoble wind, forsown, untrusted.  
The lie, tho' fair in promise, wrongs the soul,  
And truth, tho' stern, will do thee good at last.

‘ Anchor thy soul on truth ; it shall be well  
With thee whatever tempests may arise.  
If skies are ominous, and night is long,  
And clouds are mustering where the dawn should  
spring,  
Fold round thee closer the celestial mantle,  
In which the men of other days went forth

Upon their journey ; for the road is one,  
The dangers still the same, both thine and theirs.

‘ A time will come when bitter shall seem sweet,  
And sweet seem bitter, good and ill alike ;  
When palm and upas, growing side by side,  
Shall seem the same, and men shall feed on both,  
Pitching their tents beneath their common shadow ;  
When sea and earth shall mingle, and when each  
Shall vanish in the other ; when, amid  
The abrasion of old truths and creeds, no man  
Shall find the landmarks of the certain, but  
Amid a restless chaos wander on,  
Without a compass and without a star.  
May I and mine, before that day of evil,  
Be safely anchored where the light is light,  
And day is day for ever, without night ;  
Where sweet is sweet, and all the bitter gone ! ’

## BOOK XI.

---

‘FAIR earth ! with thy calm sun and calmer moon,  
Thy thoughtful stars, like loving sentinels  
That pace their rounds about thee day and night,  
With never-slackening faithfulness and care  
Keeping their glorious watch, and guarding thee  
'Gainst the rude darkness rolling in and in  
From regions out of sight ! I call thee good,  
As He once callèd thee who made thee so,  
And made thee for Himself.

‘All-nurturing earth !

With thy soft couch and coverlet of green,  
Thy curtains of the never-fading azure,  
Which have for ages rested, still the same  
In colour and in compass, on the wide  
And waving circle of a thousand plains !  
Round thy rose-braided waist, the constant sun  
Flingeth each morn his lover’s arm of light,  
Softer than down, and sings to thee the songs  
Thou lovest best from his own radiant lips.

‘Far-seeing earth ! that lookest forth on space,  
Which, like an unclaimed common, sweepeth out  
Into the dim and sad invisible,  
Beyond the darkness and beyond the light,—

Space, of which no man knows the awful range,  
The depth profound, or height above all scale,  
Haunt of old fable, home of mythic dreams !  
Thine eye is on each orb that lies becalmed  
In the dim offing of the universe,  
Like white barque coming into sight, each one  
Freighted with sunbeams from some port of light ;  
Thyself unseen, unnamed, unknown by them,  
In thy lone distance, as an atom here,  
From whose small compass millions of keen eycs  
Look up and wonder at the upper glory  
In the star-studded azure round and round :  
Thy garment the glad air, with ductile folds  
Fitting thee close, yet shaken by the breeze,  
Or vibrating with angry thunder, which  
Imparts its tremor to the startled wave,  
And wakes it from its silence and its sleep :  
Thy veil the dreaming clouds, behind whose folds  
Thou hidest thy fair brow from moon and sun ;  
Or playful mists that wander to and fro,  
Chasing each other over hill and vale :  
Thy cincture the interminable main,  
That untamed thing of beauty and of dread,  
Sparkling with everlasting amethyst,  
Clasped by sunrising and sunsetting gold,  
And on whose never-ending wilderness  
Of wave and foam the mimic stars each night  
Perform with silver feet their sparkling dance :  
Thy pliant streams, with their pellucid chains  
Knitting the sundered realms and tribes of earth,  
Binding in one her scattered provinces,

Making one realm of many, riveting  
Ocean and earth together, flinging out  
Their silver network, never soiled by age,  
Veining the hill-slopes with their living streaks,  
And clasping cities with their sunny zones :  
Thy rich embroidery of wood and cliff,  
Of lake and vale, of mountain and fresh field,  
With songs of wind that sweeps the unseen chords  
Of thy Æolian harp, now loud, now low,  
In storm or calm, with fragrance carried up  
From twice ten thousand blossoms, all awake,  
Soothing and sweetening the unsoiled air,  
In the pale twilight or luxurious noon.

‘ Gay orb ! that smilest like an emerald  
Within the sapphire casket of these skies,  
That fold thee fondly in their pure embrace ;  
Thy depths unsearchable, but filled with all  
The locked-up secrets of His love and power  
Whose thoughts are everlasting purposes,  
Whose purposes are everlasting thoughts ;  
Stored with His truth and wisdom everywhere,—  
In mystic cells beneath, in heights above,  
Of cloud and mountain, sea, and stream, and wood,  
Each with His thoughts impregnated, and with  
His beauty bright, in feature and in form.

‘ Benignant earth ! bearing upon thy breast,  
Like nurse or mother, thy vast progeny  
Of sons or daughters ; still sustaining all,  
Feeding and fondling each, replenishing  
In thy impartial bounty all alike,  
The lovely or unlovely, great or small.

‘ Glad earth ! thy golden day filled up each hour  
With all the sweetness of far-travelled sunshine,  
Arriving on thy shore from stranger-lands  
The messenger of heavenly peace and love ;  
Thy nights star-lighted, or shot thro’ with meteors,—  
Brightest when all thy dark is at its darkest,  
Like planet-lightning from another orb,  
Or gleam of angel’s lantern flashing thro’  
The astonished midnight, as its bearer passes  
On gracious errand to the sons of men.

‘ Dear ocean, too,—how shall I speak of thee ?  
Ebb thou and flow, and frown and smile and heave ;  
Still be, as thou hast ever been to me,  
My friend of friends in sympathy of soul,  
The partner of my joys and hopes and griefs !  
Thy voice is melody, thy breath is balm ;  
Thy face, as the broad sun lights up its lines  
At noon or even, a wilderness of gold ;  
Thy touch is magic to these throbbing veins ;  
Thy ripple-song is music to this ear,  
Like an old air perpetually new,  
All love and life in each familiar note  
Which the free breeze draws from thy well-tuned  
strings.

All that I know of beauty and of song  
Is in my vision ever knit with thee !  
In the capricious strains that from thy harp,  
Wind-swept, come forth, so varied and so full,  
I hear the compass of all harmony,  
The terror and the tenderness of sound ;  
The winds above thee swelling the high chord,

And thou the lower octave here below.  
 Free as the gales that ride upon thy furrows,  
 Or rest upon thy foam ; yet made for man,  
 Not man for thee ; the common of the nations,  
 Which not even she, who says she rules the waves,  
 Can call her own, or venture to enclose.

‘ Great ocean ! never stale, nor tame, nor poor ;  
 Yet still the same in voice, and hue, and vastness,  
 As when yon azure awning first hung o’er thee !  
 Thy rocks grow grey, but still thy wave is green,  
 And ever young, as when the first sun rose  
 Upon thy face and drew forth all its smiles ;  
 Thy Occidental wave as full, as when  
 Long since it rolled before the imperious gale,  
 And carved old Scotland’s rockwork of the west  
 Into a thousand bays and caves and isles,—  
 The home of mist, of shadow, and of foam ;  
 Thy breakers still as strong as when they struck  
 The splitting cliffs of Thracian Chersonese,  
 And breached the Dardanelles, or open flung  
 The gates of Calpe, to let in the storms  
 Of the far west upon the inland lake  
 That knits three continents, and drops its freshness  
 Upon the verdure of a hundred isles.

‘ Companion of my sweetest solitude,  
 I lock my arm in thine, and roam along  
 Thy margin, still conversing with thy waves !  
 I dream of thee ; my thoughts, like happy clouds,  
 Float o’er thy wind-worn plains ; I fondle thee,  
 As does the child its mother, and my eye,  
 From farthest deserts, ever turns to thee !

How soft thy rising ripple's cheerful whisper,  
And thy light wave's low wail along the shore,  
When the ripe restless corn-field, doubly yellow  
With the low radiance of the dropping day,  
Fringes thy green with gold ! O listening night !  
With eyes and ears all open, hour by hour,  
What dost thou hear and see, when leaning o'er  
The solemn surge that gazes up to thee,  
And into thy profoundest darkness sings,  
As into the bright depths of burning day,  
Its ever new and ever ancient song ?  
The melody of waves ascends to thee ;  
From thee there cometh down, like falling dew,  
The sparkle of a beauty never stale,—  
Some planet-smile, or glow of triple star,  
Sweeter than all the rest that shine above,  
On the expanse of the meek-fronted heaven.  
What gems are thine, on bosom and on brow !  
Around thy neck heaven's happy daisy-chain,  
The Milky Way, that clasps thy stainless blue ;  
Around thy waist pearl upon pearl is sparkling ;  
And on thy rounded skirts what diamonds hang,  
Which ages only burnish, and which motion,  
Swift as the lightning-shaft, displaces not  
From the deep settings of their heavenly fixture !'

Thus wrote in musing mood, with easy pen,  
On this old scroll, the poet-friend of youth,  
The studious dreamer, who now dreams no more ;  
For they that are the dearest take the lead,  
And pass on swiftest to the resting-place,—  
Bemoan them as we may,—like shipwrecked men,

Brought all the sooner to the quiet shore.  
For dreams exhaust the soul which they inspire ;  
Love wears existence down, and these fresh lives  
Are exhalations which the noon drinks in.  
I visit oft his tomb, and smooth the turf  
That swells above him. 'Tis a gentle spot,  
Where he, and not a few like him, revered,  
Rest, after earth's brief weariness. I look  
Around me, and I see them all again,—  
I see and see not, for they are not here ;  
I find nought but the ashes or the dross  
Of life's exhausted mines, the crumbled walls  
Of Time's dismantled forts. I multiply  
Figure on figure to depict the scene  
Of loneliness and ruin, yet of hope.  
Here in this graveyard, with their broken wheels,  
Disyoked and idle, in confusion lie  
Life's empty chariots, heaped above each other ;  
The race all run, the steeds like vapour vanished,  
And the impetuous charioteer gone up  
To wear the garland that he ran for here.

So muse I o'er his dust, and oft recall  
The pleasant past of fellowship and joy.  
O days for ever green, for ever dear !  
Palm-trees in the now silent wilderness  
Of irrecoverable youth ; glad isles  
At which we touched, when voyaging across  
That ocean which we navigate but once.  
I seem to see these palms, these islands still ;  
Their glow is mellower, but yet matchless all,  
In life's calm twilight, like some Abenberg

That catches the last rays of the low sun,  
When evening steals along the Alpine vale.

I found him once,—'tis an old story now,—  
In a soft morn of August stretched asleep  
Within a shaded glen, arched o'er and o'er  
With pendulous birch. The breeze went freshly by,  
And the black moss clung to the broken rocks,  
O'er which, thro' heath and fern and roses scant,  
The runnel from the mountain trickled down,  
Groping its way in darkness to the sea.  
Pale as his own pale dream the dreamer lay ;  
Light fell upon his forehead, and his hand  
Held fast the pen, as if he still would write,  
And still would think. The sheep were browsing near,  
And the sly raven sought to steal the pages,  
That flitted loosely in the busy wind,  
Taking their way to the broad pool below.  
I stopped the straying thoughts, and gave them back  
To their unconscious owner, as he woke,  
And thanked me for the treasure I had saved.  
As I returned the pages, thus I read  
The written thoughts, not worthy to be lost :—  
' The basis of man's law is sad despair  
Of human rectitude, or dark belief  
Of incurable ill ; and all in it  
Is stern repression and imperious threat.  
It is by penalties the world is ruled.  
The key to the slow mysteries of time  
Is creature-evil,—the fragility  
And helplessness of all that is not God.  
Long has man laboured with his iron bars

To imprison the volcano, which he hears  
Roaring beneath him, ready to devour.  
Long has he toiled, with bulwarks reared to heaven,  
To break the rage of storms he cannot lay ;  
Or within walls of stone to circumscribe  
The unblunted lightning which he cannot quench.  
He sees the evil, but the cure he knows not ;—  
And yet that evil was his own : 'twas he  
Who sowed the earth with poison ; who took out  
From the sweet air its health ; who lighted up  
The fires beneath ; who let the tempest loose,  
At whose assaults he stands aghast in fear.  
In the great Potter's moulding of this clay,  
So perverse and rebellious, we discern  
Power, but more wisdom. In His purpose vast,  
Of still evoking light from the abyss  
Of the profoundest gloom, which creaturehood  
Has drawn around itself and round its world,  
We see the patience of a heavenly love,  
Which clasps all being in its dear embrace,  
And seeks our love by loving to the last ;  
We hear the voice that daily bids us rise ;  
And all things here, if rightly used by us,  
Would help us to obey. The hammer-stroke  
That smites us to the earth yet says, Arise ;  
Grief wounds that it may heal ; the steady drill  
Of daily toil is that by which brave men  
Rise up into true manhood ; hunger calls  
To the high feast, and bids us diet on  
The life-containing bread, which whoso eats  
Becomes immortal, like the bread he feeds on.'

We parted not for hours ; the joyous day  
Was far too glad for parting, and the scene  
Too fair not to be revelled in together.  
Our walk was by the sea, and it was gold ;  
We breathed the mountain air, and it was balm ;  
We drank the well, and found its waters pure ;  
We sought the stream, and it was musical ;  
We looked up to the heavens, and all was light ;  
We listened to the cuckoo from afar,  
Hid in the dreamy forest, like a brook  
Warbling unseen its happy, simple lay.  
So judged we that a true man's words and thoughts  
Should ever be. . . . And so it was with him.  
He did not try to make men think him wise,  
By clothing his lean thoughts in broken mist.  
He did not write in ecstasies, nor speak  
Mysterious words which have but half a meaning.  
No sounding torrents rushed along his lines ;  
Few seraphs graced his pages ; angel-wings  
Were not extended there ; no triple sun  
Burst from the broad, black wave, to countercheck  
The hosts of stubborn night. He sung his song,  
His own clear song, and sung it well. Men heard,  
And took in all its melody and truth.  
Better than oracle or mystery  
Was calm, full speech, which no man might mistake,  
But which, within each word, contained some seed  
Of everlasting health and noble life,  
Making this poor world richer and more wise.

We took our last look of abating day  
From that majestic pinnacle of rock

Which fronts the deep, and breasts the fretful wave.  
We watched the struggling sunshine, ruby-bright,  
Caught in the meshes of the rising cloud  
That swung across the waters, and which seemed  
Part of both sky and sea,—more heaven than earth.

Peace to the pallid waste, across whose face  
Yon sea-bird sails to reach its craggy home,  
In that lone island anchored far at sea,  
The dread of shipwrecked men, upon whose rocks  
The laden merchant barque has gone to pieces,  
Strewing the shore with odours and with gems !  
Peace to the dying day, across whose face  
Darkness is spreading deep her raven veil,  
Lest mocking eyes should look upon the form  
Of the unshrouded and uncovered dead !  
Calmer and calmer grows the calm night air,  
Cooling the hot pulse of the fevered earth. . . .  
And so we turn our faces to the east,  
In hope of day once more ; for always day  
Is the world's hope, to which she lifts her eye,  
However weary and however sad  
The nights have been. Oh ! soothing sweet,  
Beyond what words can utter, is the thought  
That 'mid the imperfection all around,  
The perfect somewhere does exist, instinct  
With life unquenchable, tho' dormant now,  
And that or late or soon, 'twill surely come.  
They say that from the far and lonely stars  
There cometh heat to us low dwellers here ;  
None from the nearer moon : so the true hope,  
Full of its own unborrowed warmth and light,

Is better than the nearer glow of things  
Less real, though seeming greater. Whether we  
Are moving toward it, or it to us,  
It matters not ; the meeting day must come,  
When no love shall be distant, and no light  
Be dim or trembling. The unconscious earth  
Moves on its way undrifting, yet without  
Or helm or sail or pilot ; so all things  
Are moving out of darkness into light,  
Even when they seem most still and motionless.  
What the great day may be, what it may bring,  
We know not. It is said that fire shall seize  
The stubborn earth, and take possession of  
The universal air ; that the still stars,  
Their steerage gone, shall rush out into space,  
Or crash together in stupendous ruin,  
Quenching each other's light, or, it may be,  
Raising their blazes higher ; and that out  
Of this confusion and commixture wild  
Will rise the endless beauty and the calm  
Of universal order, ne'er again  
To be disturbed or marred. It may be so,  
Or not ; a few swift years will tell the tale.

Homewards we moved, tho' slow. The listless winds  
Went to and fro across the sleeping grass ;  
The cheerful waves, that slept not day nor night,  
Sung their old songs to us as on we passed ;  
And we gave back the music, soft and low.  
The air was peace ; the mists seemed happy dreams ;  
Star-loving silence gently breathed around ;  
Night, with its precious balm of secret health,

Dropped down upon the wave, and filled the sky ;  
One slender belt of cloud revealed the line  
Where sky and sea were meeting lovingly,  
Each seeking for itself the last embrace  
Of the last sunbeam, as it smiled adieu  
To the dim hills of the envermeiled west.  
The profile of dead nature, as it lay  
Beneath us in the dimness, spoke of calm  
And tender beauty, such as noontide knows not,  
With all the sunshine of its glowing life.

So parted we that night : he o'er the moor,  
That lay between him and his home, took way ;  
I up the mountain to the glen beyond.  
Dear paths, which steps of friendship have made dear !  
For spots are holy which beloved feet  
Have trod, or upon which beloved eyes  
Have gazed. O labyrinths of love and life,  
Of faith and doubt, of vision and of blindness,  
Our being's daily riddle !—Who shall give  
The unwinding thread that leads us calmly out  
From your dim thickets into open day ?

O earnest faith, and earnest unbelief !  
Are ye both one, as many tell us now ?  
And do ye both conduct to one sure goal ?  
Or as we sow shall we not also reap ?  
Eternal faith, eternal unbelief,  
Have they not separate offsprings ? Or are both  
The parents of a boundless blank ? Is truth  
A dream, or something colder than a dream ?  
Is certainty a thing which creaturehood  
Can never hope for ? Being and non-being,

Are they the same,—mere words of man, no more ?  
We have lived long enough if this be all.  
Being of beings ! Teach a doubting world  
What being is,—what its own being means !

Days dimly pass, and I return once more  
To my long work of love, the folding out  
And slow deciphering of these pages old,  
In which I live again my former life,—  
One life, yet many lives, I call it truly ;  
The lives of others in their varied freshness,  
Like ivy twined in greenness round my own.

Here, then, folds out another of these scrolls ;  
Old, but still plain and legible ; half worn,  
Yet with the small familiar characters  
Just as they were when first I read its lines.  
Here is the seal, sharp as when first impressed ;  
One little dint upon its edge, as if  
The hand that sealed had shaken in its pressure.  
Here are the waving lines, the blots, the bends,  
And turns and interlinings, that reveal  
At one quick glance the writer, and recall  
The image of remembered worth and sweetness,—  
The face of age and wisdom, yet of one  
Far younger than she seemed ; for change and care  
Had on her features done their mellowing work,  
And the whole womanhood within came out  
In loving gentleness and patient grace,  
Sooner by many a year than might have been :  
As if in haste to see the finished form,  
Sorrow had, in impatient eagerness,

Snatched the slow chisel from the lingering hand  
Of Time, and with a cunning all its own,  
Had, from the girl's bright buoyancy of feature,  
Struck out the staid maturity of woman ;  
Each line a history, each shade a record  
Of conflicts and of hard-won victory.  
The dreams shut up within her drooping eyes  
Came out and showed themselves; the hopes and  
fears

That wrought within her soul had found their way  
To her whole outer being,—in her tones  
Speaking with chastened softness ; in her steps  
Moving with quiet grace ; the silken life  
Of childhood wrought with skill into a texture  
Of bolder hue and firmer fibre ; yet  
The woman, all the woman, still was there.  
No gloom spoke from her eye, or on her brow  
Sat with a melancholy shade ; her lips,  
Fresh from some ruby mine, betrayed their birth,  
And sparkled like the morn, with earnest smiles,  
That spoke of the deep love within ; her face,  
Quiet and lovable, like autumn sunshine,  
Took and returned the gladness all around.

‘ ‘Tis light that casts the shadow,’ thus she writes.  
‘ And thus my life has been ; its many shades  
Have come to me as messengers of light,  
And in the shadow I could read the sun.  
Life was too bright for me at first, it wrapt  
My soul in ecstasy and earthliness.  
This is my resting-place, I said ; here is  
My heaven, and these my gods and goddesses.

It was too bright to last, yet, while it lasted,  
It hid the better life and brighter heaven.

‘ The stroke of evil smote me, yet I felt  
In the sore smiting a deep joy begun,  
And midnight seemed to me a softer noon.  
Out from the dazzling lamps, whose sickening light  
Filled the false halls of gaiety and mirth  
And soul-subduing music, to the hill,  
Which night was visiting, I hastened forth,  
And drew in with each liberated breath  
What day denied me,—long and silent draughts  
Of the delicious darkness. Now the rock,  
The desert rock, was smitten by the hand  
That knew the *when* and *how* of smiting well.  
Forth gushed the heavenly waters, never more  
To cease their flow, and, with their freshening stream,  
To quench the thirst, and turn the wilderness  
Into a garden, where all fruits and flowers  
Hang out their healing sweetness, and exhale  
Their blessed balm into the broken heart.

‘ The wine of earth, which I had drunk so long  
From an o’erbrimming cup, had lost its sparkle.  
I knew its adder’s bite, its scorpion-sting ;  
I knew, too, how it can, with secret spell,  
Intoxicate and poison. It was gone :  
The cup was broken and the wine was spilt !  
In place of it there came the sapphire cup,  
All fresh from heaven and sparkling with its joy,—  
The cup of blessing, filled with wine of peace  
And health celestial. Then I heard the voice  
Speak from above in solemn tenderness,

The voice of the long slighted and despised :  
" My flesh is meat, my blood is drink indeed."  
I took the cup, I drank, and found in it  
The wine of heaven to renovate and heal.

' For even here, upon these famished plains,  
We eat the bread that maketh dead men live,  
The eternal loaf which feedeth earth and heaven ;  
We drink the wine which sobers all who taste it,—  
Wine of a vintage which earth knoweth not ;  
Wine which brings down the fevered pulse of sin,  
Making it soft and gentle as a child's.

' Earth's achings, too, I had been made to taste ;  
The sweet and bitter both had been my lot :  
First sweet, then bitter, and both born of time,  
Both shaken from the world's enchanted tree.  
The sweet was passing sweet to me, the bitter  
Was bitterness in essence ; both are now  
Forgotten like a sick man's stormy dreams.  
' Tis rest, but still the tempest shakes the sky ;  
' Tis peace, but battle thunders all around.

' Ah, surely nothing ripens here below !  
There is no sunshine that can sweeten aught.  
Our autumns bring no mellowing gentleness ;  
The climate suits not, and the air is chill ;  
The winds that walk our valleys tear the blossoms,  
And scatter all the love which they enfold ;  
The mistral smites the Etrurian olive-bud,  
And the sirocco blights the Syrian bloom.  
Toil, passion, fret, hate,—these are not the rays  
To ripen things of heaven ; more genial far  
Must be the blaze which such soft service needs,

Or which can draw out all the secret stores  
Of sweet and noble in the soul of man  
Or woman, till the whole perfection comes  
At once, like clusters in September's vine.

‘I found, what, soon or late, all else have known ;  
That not for ever is the love of man  
To man on earth : it breaks, it fades, it dies.  
The lightning strikes it, or the worm destroys,  
Or the frost chills it into apathy.  
Man loves and loves not ; fondly doats to-day,  
To-morrow freezes ; few love on and on.  
The truest love that ever filled a soul  
Has ebbed, and left the heart all barrenness ;—  
The love that never changes is not here.  
All round the vaults of this our human life  
Are ranged in silent rows the empty jars  
Of love's delicious wine, exhaled and gone,  
Or spilt like water on the absorbing ground.

‘The first strange drop of wormwood, as it fell  
Into my cup, I can remember well.  
It was not broken friendship, loss of gold,  
Nor crushed ambition, nor a blighted name,  
Nor woman's wounds of disappointed love.  
‘Twas the slow death-bed of one dear as life,  
Summed up in all the sadness of that morn  
When she went up from us, and left behind  
Only the mortal raiment, soon to fall  
In pieces and be laid beneath the turf,  
Till the glad day of the unfolding comes.  
Death never seemed so far, nor life so near' ;—  
O bud of beauty, gem of spring and hope,

Half open and half shut, like twilight star  
Ascending from the silence of the sea,  
Girt with the morn, a thing all light and love !  
On thy smooth forehead sat immortal youth ;  
Thy lip was that of one who could not die,—  
Sweetness and strength compounded, — which was  
fullest

You could not say, so perfect was the mixture.  
In hope we long had watched ; now hope is o'er,  
And fear with hope ; anxieties are gone,  
Because the worst has come ; the loved has left us.  
Death is the death of care, even tho' it be  
The mother of all grief ; for care and grief,  
Like two pale streams that long have flowed together  
Pass into one, and each absorbs the other.

‘ The pressure of the hand had ceased ; the eye  
Had lost its diamond sparkle ; the cold cheek  
Grew colder still ; and the dishevelled hair,  
With its fair curls like twining honeysuckle,  
Was flung back on the pillow's love-smoothed snow ;  
And the full marble forehead now stood out  
In noble grandeur, tho' the soul had left  
That field, o'er which it wandered like a star,  
Sometimes half-hidden, sometimes full as day,  
Filling each vein and working in each line  
Of soft intelligence that quivered there.  
Life fluttered on a while, like some maimed dove  
With broken wing and bleeding at the heart ;—  
Life, like a flame just ready to take wing,  
Sank and revived, departed and returned,  
Then vanished, and the mortal chill came on.

‘ How oft the one that we could spare the least  
Is taken, and the idlers left behind !

‘ A mother’s kisses, like the gentle rain,  
Had come down tenderly from day to day  
Upon her fair young face, and under them  
She grew to girlhood, full of budding hope,  
That looked into the future with an eye  
That drank in only gladness ! Now she sleeps,—  
Her woman’s heart all unexpanded there,  
Her woman’s love dried up in its deep well,  
When its first overflow had just begun  
In all its sweet translucency of joy ;  
And I have laid her down for her last rest,  
And the long kiss has sealed the long farewell.

‘ If dreams have shadows, surely such are here ;  
And there she sleeps, the shadow of a dream.

‘ The light steals in upon her parted hair,  
And moves across her brow, ere death has made  
Her all his own. How bright that sudden gleam,  
How softly has she fallen asleep beneath it,  
Like snow-peak welcoming the sun’s last ray,  
When twilight creeps along the darkening plains !  
Life touched her gently all her girlhood thro’ ;  
But little of its sorrow she had known,  
Save what had come from her own buoyant heart  
And its quick throbings, as they went and came,  
Like the low violet trembling in the breeze.  
Yes ; there she lies ; her spirit all ebbed out,  
But resting still on her unclosèd eye,—  
All stillness and all softness to the last,  
Like a long, golden wave about to break

Upon a shore of gems. O bitter grief !  
Like sword of double edge, when *he* has come,  
The dark destroyer, with his poisoned spear,  
Which neither skill nor armour may repel,  
To smite our loveliest, whose arms had been  
Linked lovingly in ours from infancy,  
To cut asunder soul from soul, to tear  
In pieces, like the blossoms of the spring,  
The loves and hopes and joys that had begun  
To burst in beauty, like immortal buds  
Dropt down from heaven upon this wondering earth,  
Prophetic of a summer rich in fruit,  
And calm in the deep beauty of its skies.  
The serpent's fang has left its scar upon  
The rounded dimple of her cheek ; but she  
Has passed beyond the poison and the pain.

‘Eternity shall never shed its leaves ;  
'Tis only summer in its groves of green :  
It knoweth not the chilliness of age.  
The forehead wrinkles not ; the living light  
Takes on no shade : the face is ever fair,  
The tresses blanch not, and the eye still sparkles  
Without or change or end. Oh, well with us  
When the undying gladness has begun !  
It cannot come too soon. Each day appears  
An age, which with immeasurable stretch  
Goes out beyond the range of human hope.  
The future is our anchorage, amid  
The tides and tempest here ; tho' long delayed,  
The rest is coming for a weary race.

‘With her all life was doubled, and I missed not

Others if she were left ; but her departure  
Quenched all the rest. We can be comforted  
In the sad silence of the loneliest night  
If but one voice be left that whispers love.  
The music-teeming air, bereft of all  
Its myriad cadences save one, is still  
Vocal and sweet ; the one makes up for all :  
But when that one is gone all music dies.

‘ I looked about for comfort ; went to one  
Faithful and wise and good ; but soon returned  
To speak my sorrow to myself alone.  
He had not suffered : how then could he speak  
To sufferers ? In presence of deep grief  
Let him be dumb, or let his words be few.  
He had no son or daughter laid beneath  
The swelling turf ; he could not understand  
How to walk softly thro’ the churchyard paths,  
Or how to wipe the dew from gentle graves.  
Ere man can comfort man, he first must suffer,—  
The tearless dry no tears ; the whole in heart  
Bind up no broken spirits ; ’tis not theirs  
To mix and minister the balm that heals.  
It is by sorrow that God trains His own,  
And moulds them for the highest service here,  
Like His who, as the Man of sorrows, knew  
To soothe the sad, to speak the words that cheer.  
For common duty between man and man,  
All who have hands to toil, or lips to speak,  
Are in their measure fit ; but for high work,—  
For skill in dealing with the finest tissues  
Of man’s most inmost being when laid bare

With griefs that dry up life ; with bleeding souls  
That mutely plead for sympathy and solace,  
They only can be trusted who have been  
Trained in the school which teaches how to teach.  
For weighty are the words of sore-tried men :  
They find, we know not how, their solemn way  
Into our inner essence ; like the voice  
Of prophet, speaking language not of earth.

‘ Could He not teach us without sorrow’s stroke,  
Or mould us without all this hourly pressure,  
Or purge our dross with less of furnace-heat,  
Or cure us with a sweeter draught than this ? ’

‘ Nay, but, O child of time, whose dwelling is  
Between the two eternities, who,—who  
Art thou, replying against Him with whom  
Is no reply, and proudly arguing  
Against the wisdom of the Only Wise ?  
And who art thou, that callest hard and stern  
A discipline which trains thy headlong will,  
Imparts to it a heavenly pliancy,  
And tears the fibre of self-will and pride  
From its rough texture, till it sweetly moves  
In unreluctant unison with His  
High and all-perfect will, who thus hath tuned it ?  
Yes, who art thou, that callest long and sore  
The process, whose design is to strip off  
Incrustèd evil, and to perfect thee ;  
To bring out all thy silent depths of life  
And thought and character, which but for this  
Had lain within thee cold and unrevealed ?  
Does the harp murmur at the cunning stroke

Of the musician as he sweeps its chords ?  
Does the cold canvas cry aloud against  
The hand of genius, flinging on its face  
The magic of a thousand lights and shades,  
The colour and the freshness and the life  
Which but for that bold touch had never been ?  
Does the rough marble blame the chisel's sharpness,  
Or taunt the sculptor with unskilfulness,  
Because he did not with one master-stroke  
Draw out the beauty from the shapeless stone ?

‘ How much we should have lost, if these slow years  
Of sore, but ever-working discipline,  
Had been cut down into a single day !  
How little of ourselves should we have known,  
How little of the heart's deep mysteries,  
How little of the Chastener's power and love  
And patient wisdom, ever fresh and new,  
Had it not been for these oppressive hours  
When all the light of earth went out from us,  
And left us in this desert desolate !  
How much of glory should our God have lost,  
Had no such seasons drawn out His full heart,  
And made us feel, in weariness and pain,  
The pressure of the everlasting arm !

‘ How else should we have learned what angels  
know not,  
What angels cannot teach, what God's own Son  
Learned only by a life like ours on earth  
Of weariness and pain and poverty,—  
The Father's power to solace and to cheer,  
The filial look of trust, and the response

Of lovingness from Him to whom we look,—  
The tender touch of a paternal hand,  
That held us up and wiped away our tears,  
That in the day of suffering smoothed the brow  
Which agony had wrinkled ; above all,  
Which thus crushed out of us each earthly taint,  
And taught us what we ne'er shall know in heaven,  
The evil of a human heart, the dark  
Malignancy of sin that brought to man  
And to man's earth such ages of the curse,  
The fruit of one sad sin,—a sin which seemed  
So innocent, that none but God could know  
The eternal woes to issue from its womb ?'

Here lies the letter of a muser, fond  
To read the deeper features of the age,  
And to discover what lies underneath  
The unbeliefs and the beliefs, the loves  
And hatreds, the alliances and strifes  
Of men and minds, as they ferment and fume,—  
The occult affinities of things that differ,  
And the repulsions of what seem the same :  
The self-will reigning everywhere, and yet  
The cry for universal brotherhood.  
‘What means all this?’ he asks. ‘The sounds I hear  
Deep thundering over Europe, rolling round  
The labouring globe, they mean far more than meets  
The general ear. They come from the great depths  
Of pained humanity, with fevered heart,  
Tossing its limbs, as if by change of couch  
Or change of posture it could heal itself.

The swollen veins, the bloodshot eye of nations,  
The secret sobbing of ten thousand hearts,  
The cry for water to allay the thirst,  
For bread to satisfy the famished spirit,  
For rest to ease the impatient weariness ;—  
These tell of maladies beyond the reach  
Of man's profoundest art or boldest fraud.  
O sick beyond the power of wine or gold,  
Of cunning statecraft or despotic steel,  
Of politician, priest, philosopher,—  
Sick to the inmost soul, and He alone,  
Who heals and loves, unsought for and unknown !  
O sick to death, and in thy dark despair,  
Seeking to gods who cannot heal or save,  
Sending thy midnight messengers afar  
To Ammon or Olympia, if that from  
The dead, some voice of hope at length may come ;  
Since heaven is shut, and earth contains no friend,  
And only hell is open to thy call.

‘ Strange groping after the unseen, the world  
That lies without us, into which all go,  
But out of which no one has yet come back  
To tell us what he saw ! Strange appetite  
Of unbelief, for the incredible !  
Blind passion for the mystical and dim,  
For what is dark and magical, for error  
That looks like truth, and truth that looks like  
error,—  
The old priestly lust of power invisible  
Over men's souls and bodies,—to be gods  
Controlling life and death ; by touch or word,

To pour into the mortal, deathlessness,  
Without a resurrection or a grave.

‘So faith dies down, and the poor shrivelled soul  
Closes against the love of love, against  
Belief in the divinely true, the certainties  
Of hope, which, like the stedfast vault above,  
Gird us around, and stay our tossing hearts  
Amid the uncertainties of time and evil.  
Thus the hot air of an unhealthful age,  
From which the bracing energy is gone,  
Poisons the sweet blood of untainted youth,  
Turning it all to fever ; making dim  
The dawning lustre of a star-bright eye,  
Till shadows fall where noon alone should be.  
Thus the last snare of the ensnarer, set  
With matchless art, secures its victim man.  
Thus the world struggles on the desperate hook  
Of the dark fisher, to be landed soon,  
His sure and easy prey. Men heed not warnings,  
When faith in the invisible has perished.  
Prophet and conjuror are both alike  
To him who has no future and no haven.  
The mirror is not for the blind, and to  
The deaf both lute and trumpet speak in vain.  
The issue is at hand ; the ripened evil  
Calls itself good, and glories in its ripeness.  
All things unknit themselves ; the keystone drops,  
And the old arch collapses ; into shreds  
The banner rends ; the strong man fights in vain,—  
The shield is broken, and the sword has dropt  
From the strong warrior of a thousand fields.

‘ Health stealeth slowly, slowly in, as if  
Afraid to enter ; sickness with one stride  
Passes into the chamber ; with one stroke  
Smites down the strongest ; the deep tide of life  
Ebbs swiftly, but flows in with tardy wave.

‘ And so we wait in breathless awe and trust  
For what is surely coming. Some men say  
Earth’s sun shall never set, while others point  
To the thin shadows lengthening o’er the fields,  
And with forecasting finger bid us mark  
Yon clouds of muffled tempest, moving on,  
Like an armada with its thunder-store  
Of recompense for ages of old wrong.  
Others more hopeful or less wise, or both,  
Tell us the worst is past ; for see  
The storm has spent itself, and the last bolt  
Has struck the peak ; the clouds are limbering up ;  
The dread artillery is moving off  
The field ; and the rough air will soon be calm.’

‘ And where wert Thou, O better than the best  
Of all on earth, my everlasting friend ?  
*O tardum gaudium meum*, as to Thee  
The old father said, confessing days of sin,  
(So read I in this scroll that open lies,  
The record of a life once all but wasted,  
Yet plucked at last from vanity, and nailed  
In happy consecration to the cross).  
Not always felt nor loved, but ever near ;  
Not always sought, but ever found when sought ;  
Created beauty oft preferred to Thine,

And creature-love usurping this vain heart  
Which owed Thee all its homage : this poor world  
Admired and worshipped, Thou alone forgot,  
And Thy fair world to come, with all its fulness,  
Shut out from eye and heart. O once unloved  
And once unknown, now loved and known the best,  
Where was Thy voice amid the voices then ?  
And where was Thy companionship amid  
The brotherhoods and fellowships of earth ?  
For Thou wert ever speaking, yet I heard not,  
And ever following, yet I fled from Thee,  
And ever loving, yet I loved Thee not.  
Strewed by ten thousands o'er my daily path,  
Like flowers and gems and ingots of fair gold,  
Thy gracious thoughts and purposes I find,  
As I look back along the narrow vista  
Of this one life, so great in Thy esteem,  
And yet so madly flung away by us,  
As if no pregnant future hung upon it.  
Like the bright dew they sparkled everywhere :  
I find them in each step I took, in each  
Mutation of my life ; my being's orbit  
Has swept all these into its ample curve.  
This poor and foolish history of mine  
Teems with Thy tender love, in every part  
Ennobled and enriched and dignified  
By its connection with Thyself, and with  
Thy unbeginning past, Thy endless future.

‘ The day was Thine, and yet I saw Thee not  
In its glad ministries of health and light.  
The night was Thine, and yet I felt Thee not

In the cool darkness, as Thy careful hand,  
Like a fond mother's in her watchfulness,  
Thy star-embroidered curtain round me drew ;  
The hills were Thine, and yet I found Thee not  
On their soft slopes or in their shadowy glens,  
Or in the sculptured cliffs that tell of art  
Beyond all art, of power beyond all power.  
The streams were Thine, yet, when I drank of them,  
I did not drink of Thee, O living fount,  
Nor quench my thirst at the eternal well ;  
Nor let the influx of Thy mighty law  
Fill the void channels of this dried-up heart.  
The sea was Thine,—the unmeasurable main,  
Free as the wind, yet fettered as the rock,  
Swung to and fro by the great orbs above,  
And bathing in their daily, nightly glow,  
Yet in its vastness I discerned Thee not,  
Nor in its majesty acknowledged Thine.  
The flowers were Thine,—all thro' the well-pleased air  
From their bright censers breathing incense round,  
And brightening earth's low fields with hues of heaven ;  
I read no love in these, nor saw in Thee  
The birthplace of creation's loveliness.  
In exultation o'er the past I cried,  
“ The world is changed, and better days have dawned ;  
The golden age has come back all in bloom,  
And the hard iron time is at an end :  
And gold is taken at its proper price.  
Men may securely mock Cassandra's tale,  
And smile to silence her prophetic woes.  
Now life is at its noon, an endless noon ;

The shadow has gone by, the substance comes ;  
Death has now done its worst, its shafts are spent ;  
Evil is disappearing like a plague  
Which has fulfilled its mission ; the sweet air  
Distilleth only health and length of days."

'And where wert Thou, O gracious Son of God,  
Son of the Blessed, ever-pitiful ?  
And what wert Thou to me, in days like these,  
When youth and childhood followed other gods  
And other Christs, hewing out for themselves  
The cisterns that broke as soon as hewn ?  
To me Thy cross was nought but a rough plank  
Cut by a Roman axe from Jewish tree,  
To which, or justly or unjustly, some  
Poor Hebrew criminal was nailed in scorn.  
I saw it, but I heeded not ; the world  
Like a rich veil concealed the Crucified,  
And hid the wondrous cross of Golgotha.  
I passed it and repassed it ; but it won  
From me no look of homage or of faith.  
Absorbed in creaturehood, the things beyond,  
What the eye saw or the hand fondly clasped,  
To me were shadows or disturbing dreams :  
And youth's light barque, with May-day pennon gay,  
Swept over a fair ocean, all whose shores  
Were emeralds. Some spell had softly bound me ;  
I would not have it broken ; yet it broke :—  
It broke at last, the golden veil was gone  
That hid the cross ; the world had disappeared,  
And face to face, I found myself alone  
With Him whom I had scorned and crucified.

Weary I found myself, and here was rest ;—  
Eternal blessing for the child of time :  
Poor, and the riches of the universe  
Were gathered here : I needed but to take.  
Strange years of vanity had taught my soul  
That this world has no wells ; if e'er it had,  
They have long since run dry. But here there welled  
The life-fount whose deep gushings are for ever.  
A shadowy faith had made all truth untrue,  
And all reality to me unreal.

I had believed in dreams, and called them bliss ;  
I had believed in mists and clouds and air,  
Calling them fields and flowers and palaces.  
Now all went up in vapour : I was left  
Without a refuge ; with a heart as blank  
As the wide basin of a dried-up sea,  
Or the dark sweep of some far upland heath,  
Whose very weeds the unsparing hurricane  
Has torn up by the roots, or trodden down.

‘ O summer-love, that springs and blooms and dies,  
Within one soft, short noon, leaving us bare,  
Like a scorched Eden, or a blasted palm,  
Is there no summer when your sun has set,  
No second summer sweeter than the first ?  
Has ocean but one pearl, or heaven one star ?

‘ Yes, well for me that the old cross still stood !  
The rush of ages has not shaken it ;  
The wars of earth have left it all unharmed ;  
The fall of kingdoms has not touched its greatness ;  
The slow decay of cities and of temples  
Has not corroded its perennial green ;

The shock of storms and earthquakes, sweeping o'er  
A tottering earth, has left it where it stood,  
Untrembling and unbroken ; the one thing  
In all this crumbling globe that cannot fall.  
To some it seems the relic of an age  
Which, with its good or evil, is all gone.  
To some it seems in sombre gloom to stand  
Beclad in sackcloth ; some would drape it o'er  
With ornament, to hide its ruggedness ;—  
And some would hew it down with hellish axe ;—  
To me it shone out like a central sun,  
Diffusing over earth resistless health,  
With life and freedom and supernal peace.  
There He who tasted death dispensest life ;  
He who Himself was weary giveth rest ;  
He over whom the sun, for three sad hours,  
Was darkened, giveth light,—Himself the Sun !

‘ In a dark world how bright that glory beams,  
How excellent its splendour and its power !  
That naked cross, untouched by human art,  
Uncarved, unpolished by the hand of man,  
Just as it stood on Golgotha, outside  
The wall of Salem ; when the eternal Son  
As the One Victim, going forth to die,  
Ascended it and took with Him our guilt :  
That Roman cross, set up on Hebrew soil,  
Where Jew and Gentile meet, where earth and heaven  
Have come together, like converging orbs,  
Henceforth to be but one ; when every race  
And every nation of the populous globe  
Shall gather to this glorious centre, round

The Christ that has been, is, and is to be :—  
One heaven, one earth, one kingdom, and one fold,  
The centre of God's boundless universe,  
Home of the royal priesthood, fountainhead  
Of ministry for the eternal ages, seat  
Of holy service for the hosts of God.

‘ The oneness lingers ; yet from far we hear  
Strains that foretell its advent, sweet and slow :  
Let us be still and listen ; earthly motion  
Mars the descending melody ; our ears  
Are blunted with the jarring sounds of time.  
Shut out the babbling voices of the world,  
And let the one great voice be heard ; as if  
Thou and that voice were all the universe.  
Be still, be still ; let not thy throbbing pulse  
Deafen thine ear : ask not for sign, nor say,  
Belief comes only with the touch or sight.  
All fragrance is invisible ; the clear air  
Receives the rose-breath, but betrays it not  
To keenest eye or ear ; and all unseen  
The happy perfume floats on every side,  
But by its sweetness known. The ministry  
Of holy feet, as they move daily thro'  
The world's great hospital, is without noise.  
'Tis not the stars alone that speak to us  
In their articulate and beamy silence :  
The livingness of nature all around  
Breathes up the gentlest of all gentle voices,  
Had we but ears to hear the melody.

‘ 'Tis not the din of hammers that proclaims  
The rising temple. It is not in sound

That strength is stored. The tempest does the  
wrecking,

It is the calm that does the building up.

That which the angels know so well, and that  
Which man needs yet to learn so greatly, is  
The ministry of silence, the strange offices  
Of power and love performed by the unheard.

‘The true man sounds no trumpet, and his work,  
Unheralded, is done ere men can see  
Who did it, or put forth the bustling hand  
To help what needs no help ; itself alone,  
Like angel-breath, resistless yet unfelt,—  
Or felt but as the needle feels the pole,  
Or as the ocean feels the far-off moon.’

## BOOK XII.

---

‘I CROSSED the brook to-day, as musical  
And frolicsome as in bright days long gone ;  
With silvery leap skipping from rock to rock,  
Like a fair child on whose white silken dress  
Plays the quick sunbeam. Thro’ the mead I went  
Starred with wild daisies, all in snowy bloom.  
Above me the ribbed granite precipice,  
Festooned with overhanging ivy-wreaths’—  
(So writes the buoyant pen of one who went  
From day to day, o’er hill and moor and stream,  
To feed his portion of the flock of heaven).—  
‘Spread o’er the knolls, or clustered in the glens,  
The cottage chimneys scattered their grey smoke  
Upon the sleepy breeze. The road was rough,  
And the big boulder blocked my onward path  
Upon the ridge that overhangs the wave.  
I climbed it, and sat down to gaze around.  
The mountains rose in majesty above me ;  
The sea broke far beneath me, just so far  
As I could hear its dash upon the rocks.  
A little child was playing with the ripples ;  
The idiot boy walked idly to and fro,  
Watching the far-off sail with vacant eye,

His hands behind him, holding each the other ;  
The dim stripes went and came upon the wave,  
The clouds watched leisurely their own strange shadows,  
And sometimes showed and sometimes hid the sun :  
The sea-bird screamed and flashed along the ooze,  
Or plunged into the brine to snatch his prey.  
The breath of day was sweet, and its warm pulse  
Quickened all nature with a double glow.

‘ I sat and gazed ;—a flock of sheep went by,  
Entrusted to a cripple’s care ; they turned  
Aside and wandered everywhere : with much  
Labour and weariness, he followed them  
Along their devious ways, mile after mile,  
Till one by one he gathered them, and brought  
The undivided flock to the green fields,  
That lay before them in the pleasant glen  
Just out of sight, where shelter, shade, and stream  
Awaited them. Even such the way, I said,  
In which the better Shepherd brings His flock,  
Weary and straggling, o’er a hundred wastes,  
Thro’ perilous uplands to the fields of life.  
Often I’ve wondered how, with such fierce foes,  
Such storms and snares and meagre pasturage,  
And with such poor and feeble shepherding,  
The little flock of earth should ever reach  
The eternal fold. And yet they all are there,  
Or shall be soon, not one left wandering here,  
Prey to the prowling wolf, or ’mid the rocks  
Famished and lorn and lost ; for above all,  
Still looking down upon His helpless ones  
And loving them with undecaying love,

Sits the Good Shepherd, He who gave His life  
For the dear flock, and who forsakes them not.

‘Good Shepherd ! in these days of subtle ill,  
When all the elements of earth and sky  
Are on the side of doubt ; when unbelief  
Assumes the garb of faith, speaks with its voice,  
And steals its holiest words ; when the dark foe,  
Unwearied seeks his victims ; day and night,  
Watch Thy lone flock ; and tho’ the shepherds here  
Know little of the Shepherd’s love and skill,  
Take Thou Thyself the rod and crook and staff ;  
Do Thou the work which only Thou canst do !  
Watch Thou the fold, for every beast of prey  
That loves the night, howls round its broken wall.  
Fetch home the wanderer ; bid the loiterer haste,  
Lest night come down ere shelter has been found.  
Bind up the broken, bid the weary rest ;  
Soothe sorrow with Thy words of sweetest grace ;  
Be eyes to the benighted and the blind ;  
Lay Thy strong hand on frowardness, and let  
The wilful learn submission to Thy will.  
Grasp firm, with hand that cannot let them go,  
The timid lambs that look all round for help :  
Unspotted from the world, O Shepherd, keep them ;  
Let not their feet be taken in its snares.  
The sky is sullen, and its air is cold ;  
The day has no kind promise in its air ;  
The wind goes by in anger, threatening soon  
To come again and do its work of waste :  
The lightning lurketh in yon ragged cloud,  
Ready to strike. The rivers are dried up,

The pastures poor and scanty, interspersed  
With poison-weeds, so like the pleasant grass,  
That, in their hunger, the unwary sheep,  
Unwatched, unwarned by heedless shepherds here,  
Feed on the beauteous poison-leaf, and die.  
O flock, O fold, O Shepherd good and true,  
Must it be ever thus ? Hast Thou, O Christ,  
Forgot Thine own, or has Thy love been foiled ?  
Thy sheep are bleating, and they plead with Thee.  
Hast Thou no answer in this day of cold,  
Bleak half-belief or worse, when faith pines o'er  
The dried-up pastures which once promised fair ?  
And must Thy flock appeal to Thee in vain ?  
Is Thine hand shortened that it cannot save ?  
Hast Thou begun to break the bruised reed ?  
Hast Thou resolved to quench the smoking flax ?

‘ When God is angry with His flock, they say,  
He sends them a blind shepherd in His wrath.  
Be no such blindness mine ! No indolence,  
Idling away the living hours of morn,  
And dreaming all day long of noble work,  
Yet leaving all that noble work undone.  
No love of self be mine, as if for self  
This life were given ; no shrinking from the toil,  
The heat, the frost, the tempest or the night,  
If one poor sheep be out upon the moor.

‘ One such lorn waif I still remember well,  
Tho' he has passed the border long ago,  
And gone into the upper fold, where storms  
Vex not, nor hot winds dry the pasture up.

He lived in yonder heath-thatched hut, o'er which  
That graceful mountain-ash is casting now  
Its flitting shadow, as the quick breeze shakes it.  
'Tis a poor dwelling for humanity :  
The rain drips thro' the roof, the gable-chinks  
Let in the wintry chills, the floor is clay :  
The lattice small and dim, tho' round it trails  
The sweetest rose that ever blushed in June.  
In front the little patch of garden breathes  
Fragrance and health, from many a beaming flower  
That lifts its beauty to the admiring sun,  
As daily he smiles down upon this waste.

' There he was born ; and there it was he heard  
In childhood the immortal words of peace,  
The news of life, thro' the almighty death  
Of Him who went up to the cross for us,  
That the great darkness might be overcome,  
And sunshine, brighter than the day's, descend  
To breathe eternal brightness over earth.  
The Just One bound, the unjust goeth forth ;  
The captive's chain, transferred to other limbs,  
No more forbids the victim to be free !—

' But from his home he went ; and his home-faith  
Passed out of him ; and one by one each gem  
Of cherished truth was flung upon the sand.  
He would be greatly wise ; he would create  
His own high wisdom, and to none would he  
Be debtor, least of all to those who lived  
In other days, and thought the olden thought.  
Save to himself, he would owe nought to any.  
He would believe in matter, not in spirit ;

In darkness, not in light ; in unbelief,  
And not in faith ; in guesses, not in truth ;  
In newness, not in oldness ; and his creed  
Should wholly be his own and not another's.  
Whether this green earth had an owner, he  
Would find out for himself ; whether above  
These skies there was a region, goodlier,  
And more unchanging, he would for himself  
Make sure ;—philosophy would tell him all,  
Or tell him there was nothing to be told.

‘ But darkness could not bring him rest, and doubt  
Had poison in it to his soul ; he walked  
In sadness to and fro ; his troubled heart  
Took on the darkness it had chosen, till  
His very being was a thing of doubt,  
And all within was storm ; before his eyes  
Thin spectres flitted ; he had lost the power  
Of crediting the words of God or man.

‘ Evil became his good : he drank each cup  
Presented to his lips, and what might be  
Therein of sweetness or of bitterness  
He asked not ; for he said that joy  
Was all a fable ; he would eat and drink,  
Depart and be forgotten in the earth,  
Like a tired leaf that drops into the stream,  
And on it takes its way to the wide sea,  
In its cold depths to find a sepulchre.

‘ Self-hindered in the race of life, he blamed  
All but himself ; and most of all the Being  
Whose dreaded name his lips refused to name.  
He threw himself upon a midnight tomb,

And between sod and star protested loud  
Against his own creation. He was wronged ;  
But how to right the wrong he could not find,  
Or to avenge himself against his foe.  
The marble flung itself against the sculptor,  
And called for justice. Who had dared  
Without his will to assign him such a lot ?

‘ Poor as he was, he had both read and thought ;  
Yet all in vain : life was a destiny  
He must fulfil, he said ; he could not shun it,  
Even tho’ he would ; and he must bravely breast  
The billows to the last, until he sank,  
And in that sinking take revenge upon  
A fate with which it was in vain to struggle.

‘ I watched his wanderings, pitied him, and strove  
To win him to the love that he had lost,  
And to the faith that he had cast away.  
O’er many a waste I followed the stray sheep,  
But it fled faster from me ; I pursued  
Thro’ darkness and thro’ light, in cold and heat ;  
In weariness and sorrow I went on.  
But all in vain ; the wanderer fled apace,  
The shepherd from his weary search returned,  
Baffled in love, but not ashamed of loving.

‘ Sweet childhood, like a trampled garden, lay  
Behind him and around him, meant to be  
Fragrant and beautiful, but marred throughout ;  
Its flowers all dead or broken. Often back  
Upon it he would cast a troubled eye,  
When his dark follies bore him down to earth ;—  
But still he chased the wind and sowed the sand.

‘ Sin smote him to the dust at last : his god  
Could not deliver in the day of ill.  
And he lay down to die, returning home  
After long erring years ; without a hope.  
The light seemed blotted from his firmament ;  
Nor sun nor stars for many days appeared.  
He wished to hide himself from God and man.

‘ But hope was nearer than he thought ; it came  
In ways he little looked for. The old truth,  
Buried so long and trodden under foot,  
Rose up to re-assert its dormant power  
Within him, as he lay thus, face to face  
With the near death he had so long defied.  
The well-known walls seemed written o’er with it :  
The cottage-hearth seemed to retain its warmth ;  
His father’s grave, hard by the churchyard gate,  
Beneath the elm, shone strangely bright with it :  
The old hills echoed it, and to the rocks  
It seemed to cleave still closer than the moss  
That clothed them with a softness not their own.  
The happy stream seemed to derive its mirth  
From the glad words that had so often mixed  
With its own music ; the benignant breeze  
Bore back the hymns of childhood to his heart.  
He was like one from whom all later life  
Had passed away, as by some sudden spell,  
And into whom his former, truer being  
Had come in haste, as with transfiguring power.  
It was as if some angel in his arms  
Had lifted him in love, and borne him back  
O’er twenty wasted years, to set him down

Once more beneath the shadow of the cross,  
To have his fever cooled, his wounds bound up,  
His spirit's strength restored as by a touch  
From heaven, and all his worn-out being healed.

‘ Yet not without a struggle ; for the darkness  
Fought with the light, and the deep unbelief  
Repelled the faith.—But the true light was strong,  
And overcame : the night gave place to day.  
He seemed to stand beside the altar ; there  
The smoke and incense rose, and filled the air,  
Covering the guilty one as with a shield.  
The blood took hold of him ; and its strange touch  
Dissolved his guilt, as if it had not been.  
Another's life was lying there instead  
Of his ; and all his doom he saw reversed.  
Another's strength had fought the fight for him,  
Another's love had won the victory,  
Another had gone in for him to God,  
And had prevailed. The righteous peace was sealed.

‘ It was as if in him, the furthest gone  
Of earth's poor waifs, forgiving love had been  
Strained to the uttermost ; as if for him  
The mighty sacrifice of Golgotha,  
Whose fulness is beyond all thought, had been  
Taxed to its highest value : seldom had  
Wounds such as his been healed, and stains so foul  
Been blanched to purity ; and seldom had  
Anguish like his passed into such sweet peace,  
The prelude of the peace to which he went.—  
Was ever tempest ended in such calm ?

‘ Good Shepherd, Thou hast won Thine own at last !

The sheep is on Thy shoulders now ; Thy joy  
Is greater than his own : Thou hast not sought  
The lost in vain ; Thy search is ended now ;  
The song begins ;—hark, how it swells afar,—  
Lo, this my son was dead and is alive,  
Was lost, is found ; 'tis meet we should be glad !

‘ Good Shepherd, we would know Thy tender love,  
The love that knows no failure and no bounds,  
And all that love has undergone for us,—  
The mountains Thou hast crossed in search of us,  
The floods which Thou hast breasted, the wild tracts  
Of desert and of darkness Thou hast traversed,  
The toil Thou barest, all the buffetings  
Of tempest, all the bitterness of death  
Thou hast encountered, to deliver us !  
Thou followedst us, who bidst us follow Thee :  
Thou restedst not till Thou hadst found for us  
A rest which weariness shall ne'er invade ;  
Thou canst not rest till all Thine own are gathered ;  
That fold of Thine would not be what it is,  
The home of gladness and of plenty, were  
One, even the least of all Thine own, left out.  
Blest they who find Thee, blest whom Thou hast found ;  
Within Thy fold of peace they dwell secure.  
Around its walls the wolf may rage in vain ;  
O'er it the storm may gather : they are safe.

‘ I sought him out the night before he died.  
The snow was drifting, and the impetuous gale  
Shook the spare walls. Its din disturbed him not ;  
The inner calm repelled the outer tempest,  
And the low voice, soft stealing from above,

Filled every chamber of his happy being :  
There was no room for other voices now.  
" Into the valley I go down with Thee,  
O Son of God," he said ; " and where Thou once  
Didst rest Thee will I rest ; Thy tomb be mine,  
And mine Thy resurrection : Thou in me,  
And I in Thee, in death as well as life.  
Each has his resting-place, and I have mine,  
A heavenly pillow for an earthly bed.  
I know Thou livest ; nay, Thou canst not die.  
Because Thou livest, I shall also live,  
And Thou wilt show to me the path of life,  
For all Thy immortality is mine."

' He seemed to see within the open gate,  
And his eye kindled with a brightness which  
Was not of earth, as if the glow of sunrise  
Upon the top of some immortal hill  
Had caught his vision ; or it might have been  
The glory of the city, where they need  
No sun or moon to lighten them, but where  
Jehovah is the everlasting light,  
And the long day of mourning at an end.

' He passed away as some belated star,  
Last of his fellows, in the summer dawn,  
Dissolves into the gold of rising day :  
The bright still bright, altho' invisible  
To our short-visioned eye ; the beautiful  
Lost in superior beauty, yet still fair  
To other eyes beyond that rounded roof.

' So have I seen, after some sweeping storm,  
When the gale sunk, the long wave wearily

Fling itself down upon the welcome sand,  
Glad of a resting-place however cold.

‘I left, retracing thro’ the deep-strewn snow  
My steps in darkness. I had found the lost,  
And what to me was winter’s ice or wind ?  
I had seen thro’ the half-unfolded gate,  
And watched the worn-out wanderer passing in,  
The earth-robes of this lean mortality  
Exchanged for raiment richer than the noon.  
That was enough. All summer gathered round me ;  
The shrill pipe of the winter-blast was song,  
And the bare boughs were blossoming. The snow  
Transformed itself into a lily-plain,  
And sudden fragrance filled the air with balm.  
The stars shone out and formed the avenue  
Thro’ which the wanderer had just gone home,—  
A home from which he should go out no more,  
In that untainted clime, whose loveliness,  
Divinely luminous, divinely pure,  
Knows but the sunshine of a heavenly morn.

‘I’ve known a land ; and I have called it mine ;  
Than which there seems none fairer ; none so fair.  
There may be smoother skies and safer seas ;  
Winters less rude and springs of softer breath ;  
There may be gayer gardens, ruddier fruits ;  
But not to these does my soul warmly turn.  
The land I’ve known has grandeur grander still ;  
In rugged majesty of hill and vale  
It lifts its head above its richer peers.  
The tale it telleth of the wise and good,  
The great in war, in council, and in love,

Is such as this old earth has seldom told.  
I know the uplands where the torrents rush,  
Beloved nurslings of the mountain-slope,  
Chasing with silver feet each other down  
Into the deep pool of the hazel glen.  
I know the forests whose gaunt branches weave,  
Between us and the clouds, their roof of gloom ;  
Where, wandering like lost children in the wood,  
The night-winds sigh for day. I've climbed the steeps  
On which the boulder rests, caught in its plunge  
From the grey precipice, around whose waist  
The heather twines its old imperial purple,  
Like robe of kings. I've watched the bluffs that fling  
Their broken shadows o'er the subject sea ;  
The forelands where the free, far-travelled gale  
Breaks in dark wrath or breathes in summer balm ;  
The lonely lakelet, like a silver cup  
Set round with emerald amid the hills ;  
The iris on the cold, exhaling spray  
Of the lone waterfall, as it descends  
Amid the verdure of a thousand firs,  
When summer wanders thro' the waving woods.  
I know old Cheviot's green, round summits, which  
Watch the wide ocean spreading out afar,  
And smile upon a hundred gushing streams  
Beneath his feet, from Solway to the Tweed :  
The mountains, too, at whose far-stretching base  
Rome once her legions mustered, when she pierced  
The Caledonian forest with her sword :  
And the grey peaks of Torridon that frown  
O'er the Atlantic surges, when the sun,

Like some bright bird of gold, with outspread wings,  
Is seen escaping into Western night.  
I know, too, the lone islands far at sea,  
The ten score Hebrides, whose battlements  
Defy old ocean's war, and countercheck  
The long rush of the angry occident ;  
The battered clefts between whose granite walls  
The surge sweeps booming, where the brittle wave,  
Caught in its rising by the tempest, breaks,  
And spreads its sparkling fragments o'er the shelf  
Of the brown rock. I know that island-speck  
Of giant columns, heaving like the wreck  
Of some submerged cathedral of past ages,  
Which had gone down into the deep and left  
Its organ-pipes still standing, all their music  
Buried for ever, while, around the ruin,  
The mocking waves roll their unfeeling jar.  
I've walked the mist-swept moorlands which the bard  
Has peopled with the fables of the past,  
Where Fingal's sword once gleamed, and Ossian's voice  
Threw far its broken notes upon the wind ;  
To polished ages sending down the bold  
Unchiselled verses of the olden day ;—  
Where streamy Carum rolls in joy, and where  
The trembling dweller of the rock took up  
His harp, to sing of coming war and death,  
The haunts of mystery where the shrieking gale  
Scatters the waves o'er the white sands of Mora.  
‘ Men scorn the bareness of a land like this,  
And sing of the gay garden-vales afar  
Where flowers send up their thrilling scent, like song.

They say the heath is our sole garden flower,  
Varied sometimes by thistle and by thorn.  
So be it: yet it is this ruggedness  
That has so marked and shapen us, engraving  
Its own peculiar impress on our foreheads,  
Moulding our mien, our song, our history.  
The step of mountaineers is always graceful,  
The soul of mountaineers is always free,  
The song of mountaineers is always clear.

‘Such is the land I’ve looked on: it is fair;  
None seemeth fairer to my eye than this  
But what of all its beauty, set beside  
The glory of the realm surpassing thought;  
Realm of the living and the holy, where  
Of beauty the perfection dwells, fit realm  
For perfect and immortal eyes to gaze upon.

‘Into that land the wanderer now has gone  
(I said within myself); out of this cold  
He has gone up to where no winter comes.  
Sickness is changed into eternal health;  
The child of day has reached the light at last.  
I wished him joy that night, and only sighed  
Because I could not follow him; for now  
The icy blast blew keener, and the snow  
Smote me on every side, and blocked my way,  
Waking me up, from happy reverie,  
To the sad consciousness that I was still  
On this side of the City, many a mile  
Between me and that gate across whose threshold  
The shade of death has never once been thrown.

‘ Death, how I hate you ! foe of man and God,  
First-fruit of sin and old ally of hell ;  
Breaker of human hearts, and poisoner  
Of earthly peace ; unseen, but mightier  
Than all that’s visible ; linked with no clime  
Or age, but claiming all ; who enterest  
With ease where armies cannot force their way,  
Mocking the barrèd fort ; whose foremost joy  
Is to lay desolate our hearths and homes,  
To break the links of love and rend in twain  
All that we call the indissoluble here :  
To fill this soil with graves, and spread above them  
The smiling turf to cover thy misdeeds,  
Rearing the stone to bid it tell how much  
Of lost affection thou hast buried there.  
Death ! how we loathe thee ; even when thy sting  
Has been plucked out ; and how we daily long  
Impatient, yet in hope, for the glad day  
When, for the havoc thou hast wrought on earth,  
The unrepented slaughter of His Saints,  
God shall Himself arise to spoil the spoiler,  
And pour His righteous vengeance on thy head !  
All nature hateth thee, dark sorcerer,  
Under whose venomous spell her beauty pales.  
Thy curse is upon her ; her curse on thee :  
Which shall prevail at last she knows, and thou  
Knowest right well ; O thou who hast so long  
Into corruption turned her comeliness !  
Beneath thy wanton touch her blossoms die,  
Shape, scent, and hue all smitten by thy breath.  
Thy rude remorseless hand shakes down her strength ;

Thy leaden look maketh her fair cheek wan,  
To ashes turns her glory, brings to dust  
Her power and grandeur, so that all she was  
Becomes as tho' it was not. Mighty death !  
What sway is thine ; and yet that sway shall cease !  
Thy sceptre shall be shivered, and thyself  
Cast out for ever ; tho' creation's hope  
Seems to have passed away, and dull despair  
Crept over man. The inarticulate earth  
Sobs, but no one regardeth, weepeth sore,  
Like Rachel for her children ; but they come not,  
And vain man tells her they shall never come.  
Yet still she waiteth on ; her hills and vales  
Are sighing for the day, when from above  
The signal shall be given, and the great shout  
Shall rise from the delivered earth and sea  
Of victory won, and the long warfare o'er.

‘ Upon the battle-plain, where blood like streams  
Moistened the soil, and bodies of the slain  
Made rich the barren dust, there spring bright flowers,  
Unseen before, turning the moorland waste  
Into a garden ; so upon the soil  
Of our dead joys, our slaughtered hopes, there rise  
Flowers of unearthly loveliness, and trees  
Of broadest shadow and of sweetest fruit.  
We are enriched by death ; our highest life  
Is cold corruption's offspring, and the grave  
The parent of celestial fruitfulness.

‘ And need they then the gate and wall and tower,  
These dwellers in the Salem that shall be ?

Not as we need them now; for then no foe  
 Assails; no fierce Assyrian more shall pitch  
 His tent before thee, city of the blest,  
 Or shake his spear against thy palaces.  
 No Gentile battle-axe shall ever hew  
 Thy rampart down, or thunder at its bars.  
 No Roman torch shall fire thy shrine, or light  
 Thy funeral pyre; no prophet, false or true,  
 Shall mount thy walls to warn of coming doom,  
 Or say, Flee out of her, her hour is come,  
 Her day of trouble and of treading down,  
 Her day of farewell and captivity.

‘All that is over: tears are wiped away:  
 Thy songs shall never cease; no night is thine;  
 No death can find its way into thy streets,  
 Or hang its drapery upon thy walls.  
 Thy joy is full; thy light shall never fade,  
 For the one Sun that cannot set has risen  
 Upon thee with its holy health and love.

‘Why need they then these gates, even tho’ of  
 pearl?

Not as they needed them of old, against  
 Assault of battle, but for beauty, as  
 The soul the body needs, the stars the blue  
 In which their light is set; not for defence,  
 But to enhance the splendour and the joy.

‘O ever-open gates, that without voice  
 Bid a perpetual welcome all around,  
 Beckoning the numbers without number in!  
 The city-gates of earth receive alike  
 The evil and the good; but ye the good

Admit alone into the unstained city ;  
For nothing that defileth enters there.

‘ Ye silent hands and knees ; ye upturned eyes  
Of the far-scattered family, who o'er  
These frozen plains of earth are pressing on  
To the one common home-land ; full of hope,  
Yet pressed with burdens others know not of :  
I think of you ! The sounds of revelry  
Are all about you, for the inebriate world  
Rests not, nor day nor night ! Its wassail-cup  
Goes round the city, and its song is loud.  
The notes that cheer you, children of the light,  
Come from afar. How sweetly do they steal  
In on the ruffled spirit, like night odour  
From gardens all in bloom, that floateth up,  
And sweetly thro' the cool, calm darkness breathes  
Into the chamber, where, in weariness,  
Fever lies tossing on its burning bed.

‘ But now I quit this rocky resting-place,  
Where I have lain, unmindful of the hours,  
Which like so many dreams have come and gone ;  
And take my onward way, to tend my flock,  
Sore needing all the watchfulness and love  
That a poor earthly shepherd can bestow :  
And as I go, I sing the ancient hymn,  
*To shepherds first the heavenly Shepherd came ;*  
Or muse upon the Church's old refrain,  
*The Lamb redeems the sheep ;* and call to mind

The old father's words, just such as suit me now,  
*Feeding their sheep they found the Lamb of God.*

“Only a shepherd,” said I to myself,  
As I moved onward ; “not a priest am I ;  
Yet of the royal priesthood I am part.”  
I wear no ephod, and I shed no blood ;  
No incense and no censer do I bear :  
'Tis not with fire and ashes that I deal ;  
These hands no victim bind, and lift no knife  
To slay the unblemished lamb at morn or even.  
The sacrifice, with which I daily deal  
For others and myself, is past and done :  
I cannot add aught to its potency.  
'Tis once for all ; no poor unfinished rite  
That needs to be repeated day by day.  
It had what I have not, and what my doings  
Can never have,—perfection infinite ;  
And that prevails for me ; in it I stand,  
Received of God, because of that pure life,  
And that great death accepted in my name.  
I do not eat the holy presence-bread,  
Yet have I bread to eat which others know not,—  
The bread of God which giveth dead men life,  
Celestial fruit that maketh sick men whole,  
And nourishes the living in this land  
Of mortal famine ; better far to me  
Than angel-viands, the eternal bread  
Divine and true, the soul-sustaining wine,  
From a celestial banquet, ever new.  
I do not stand without, as one in dread,  
Nor gaze with awe upon an unrent veil,

Or sword of fire that threatens death to me  
If I go in to worship. Nothing now  
Of danger or of distance or of death !

‘ I do not come to sacrifice, nor raise  
Anew an altar that has passed away.  
And yet I come with blessing and with peace  
From priestly hands, resistless in their power,  
Able to cope with evil at its worst,  
To pluck from the world’s heart its sharpest thorn,  
Whitening its reddest stains, eradicating  
Each root and tendril of envenomed ill,  
More than restoring the long-banished joy.  
Then shall be joy, the joy of sorrow past  
And evil days all done ; of ended toil,  
And well-rewarded watching here, the joy  
Of the great gathering of the scattered flock  
To the one fold by the one door, when He  
Of the sharp sickle and the golden crown  
Shall come to reap the harvest of the ages !

‘ It shall be morning then ! The morn of morns,  
On the long slopes of the eternal hills !  
The sun that bringeth undecaying health  
To a sick world shall rise ; the stars depart,  
Unneeded then. And with that dawn shall come  
All the good things that morning brings with it,  
Light, song, and gladness for the sons of men.  
Unbar the gate of morning ! Let it fly  
Wide open with its amber and its gold.

‘ I do not see the end, and yet it comes :  
I see no change in seasons or in years.  
They keep their time, unhastened and unstaid

By human changes: just what summer was  
Two thousand years ago is summer now.  
The fields put on their green as May returns,  
And the flowers know their months; the wind takes up  
Its summer-harp, and thro' the long rich day  
Pours its new melody in concert with  
The carol of the streams, the mirth of waves,  
The joy of blossoms; and the ancient sun  
Shines as at first, taking his well-known place  
Each morn, still fair and young, and undiscoloured  
By the smoke-taints that stain our thickened air.  
No poorer are the stars with their long years  
Of liberal lending to a needy earth:  
In orbit, motion, sparkle, still the same  
As when they burst upon the new-made globe.  
All things continue as they were, above,  
Below; and look as if no change could come,  
No law of nature suffer a reverse.

‘ But yet we know the past is not the future,  
And God does not repeat Himself; we may  
Be nearer the grand conflict than appears,—  
The final battle between ill and good  
That shall decide this planet’s destiny.  
Let it make haste; it shall be welcome; not  
For its own self, but for the peace it brings,  
The victory in which the spoiler shall  
Be spoiled, his weapons broken, and himself  
Bound in eternal chains, by Him who came  
To fight our battle here, and to undo  
Our evil and to conquer earth for man.

‘ What on its surface, or in secret depths

Of its infinity, space may contain,  
Of dormant treasure and unquickened good,  
Yet to arise and visit its vast realms,  
We know not now. But if six thousand years  
Have in this one small sphere uncovered stores  
So measureless, what may we look for, when  
The ages of the ages shall reveal  
Their still unripened hoards, their untouched mines,  
Their depths to which no plummet has gone down !  
What unimagined harvests may we not  
Reap from the seed sown for the universe,  
In this rough outfield of our barren earth,  
Where the eternal Word took flesh and lived ;  
Where the eternal Son bore sin and died ;  
From which, in His own body, He has carried  
Up to the throne our very dust, a pledge  
Of all things glorious to be done and seen,  
Not here alone, but thro' creation, when  
The day of the deliverance shall dawn !

‘ O heaven and earth, who fathoms your profound ?  
All that we know of you is as a leaf  
From some interminable forest-waste.  
O time and space, who knoweth what ye are ?  
We see above us the unmoving vault  
Studded with gems. But what are ye ? And whence  
Come ye, or into what do ye move on ?  
Around what centre do your orbs revolve ?  
Where are your temples and your palaces ?  
Or to what hill of worship do your tribes  
Go up, to sing the universal song ?  
Ye speak to us of things beyond what eye

Hath seen, the unbeginning and unending.  
In you we are be-misted ; not a trace  
Of footsteps, save the few around our tents ;  
All beyond these is solitude and awe.  
That star-beach, which men call the Milky Way,  
From what invisible sea hath it rolled in ?  
That radiant arrow, light zodiacal  
They name it, from what quiver hath it come ?

‘Sorely and long has this sick world of ours  
Needed a healer ; for her wounds are deep,  
And they who bind them up but mock her pain.  
Her fever runneth high ; and yet she says,  
“My brain is tranquil, and my eye is clear ;  
There is no riot in this peaceful pulse :  
I need no healing, save that which has come  
From the old tree of knowledge, on whose fruit  
The race has fed, and, feeding, has outgrown  
Its infancy, becoming nobly wise.  
Man is his own Messiah, and shall soon  
Bring all things under his self-potent sway.  
Judge of what God has spoken, or should speak,  
Why should he not be God, if not to others,  
At least to his own self ? Why should he not  
Discern all things, the evil and the good ?  
Why should he not defy both pain and death,  
And be himself the judge of wrong and right,  
Untrammelled by exterior law in aught ;  
Uncircumscribed in liberty or thought  
By writ or rescript, human or divine ;  
Unchallenged in his claims to disbelief  
Or to believe what seemeth best to him ?”

‘ Man thinks, and toils, and reasons, but the race  
Reaches no higher level : sword and science  
Have done their utmost, but the world is not  
At rest : philosophy looks round and wonders ;  
The orator, with open palm persuading,  
Or with clenched hand denouncing, does his work ;  
But the deep seat of evil is unreached :  
The statesman marvels at the helplessness  
Alike of steel and gold, and asketh why  
It is so difficult to minister  
Justice and order. Human voices speak  
Nobly and well, but ever speak in vain ;  
They all are but the signals of distress,  
The rockets fired at sea to call for help,  
Which none can give, for each man needs the same,

‘ And still the wound remains unprobed, uncured ;  
The head still acheth, and the fever rages ;  
A few years turn the golden head to grey ;  
The sick-bed tosses, and the lazardhouse  
Still moans ; man maketh war with death,  
But death takes no alarm ; it holds its own,  
Unslackened in its enmity or power,  
Pressing to every lip with pitiless hand  
The mortal aconite, whose silent drop,  
Falling alike on age and infancy,  
Dissolves the link between the visible  
And the unseen of this compounded frame,  
Expels the soul, and leaves the body dust,  
Filling the mould with graves, the air with sighs ;  
Living and dead alike the witnesses  
Of a malignant foe, whose mastery

No skill can baffle, and no strength disarm.  
Man girdeth on his armour for the war,  
But takes the field in vain : unarmed or armed,  
Wary or rash, the issue is the same ;  
He fights a foe that never lost a field,  
Nor shall, till the long-promised Conqueror comes.  
Then life resumes its glory ; this dull dust,  
Like morning, sparkles into loveliness  
Brighter than what it lost when it lay down.  
Ah ! love, and light, and peace, long banished hence,  
Return again and fill this vacant earth,  
Which long has missed your presence, and has sighed  
For your return and stay ; when shall we have  
Your rainbow-visits, then no longer brief,  
Or marked by clouds, but as the ages long,  
And numerous as the happy hours of day ?

‘ Nothing is lost of good that ever moved  
Across the face of this tenacious earth,  
Which, with most jealous grasp, like miser’s, holds,  
Unseen, unfelt, the imperishable life  
Which once it nourished ; and the light of ages  
Is stored for coming ages, purged and winnowed  
From all depraving grossness, and all leaven  
Of mutinous evil such as taints it now.  
No failure more in creaturehood ; the height  
Is reached ; descent becomes impossible.  
Then the “ Survival of the fittest ” comes ;  
But He alone selects the fittest who  
Made every atom, moveth every star,  
Giving to each its proper law of being.

‘ We wrong creation and we wrong ourselves :

Our masters are within us ; we are not  
The freemen that we think ; we do not see  
Our bonds and scourges, but the tyranny  
Is not the less disastrous. Freedom comes  
All from without ; the law of liberty  
Owneth a gravitation not of earth.  
The law of life, and progress, and ascent,  
Is something which we only guess at here.  
Evil is bondage, and it works by law ;  
By law alone, then, can it be annulled,  
And man made master of himself once more.

‘ Age rolls on age, and all are big with meaning ;  
Each era has its thought, or great or small,  
Or false or true, and the thought marks the age.  
We know some by their songs, and others by  
Their silence ; others by their storm and cloud ;  
Few by their sunshine, for the age of sunshine  
Is yet to come,—end of eclipse and gloom,  
End of all failure and all feebleness,  
Of misplaced purposes and wasted lives ;  
When retrogression shall be known no more,  
But all be progress, ever on and up,  
To levels higher than all science dreams.  
Dawns the fair day of knowledge when we pluck  
The unforbidden tree, and are made wise,  
When holy rule knits the whole world in one,  
And the true comity of nations comes,—  
One throne, one brotherhood, and God Himself  
Leading the glory of unfolding life,  
Throughout the expanding universe of joy,  
The first, the last, the all of space and time.

The potency of sin has been unveiled ;  
The cancerous taint, the deep and terrible  
Evil of evil, has through ages dark  
Been brought to view, and the one cure of all,  
Resistless and enduring, now is found.  
Health of the world, thou everlasting cross !  
Diffuse thy balm, and bid humanity  
Sit down beneath thy shadow, there to rest,  
Safe from the tempter and his subtle snare,  
Beyond the dread of ill. The years of peril  
Have not been few ; often has hope's fond  
finger

Been pointed to some gleam between the clouds ;  
And oft the cheated heart has gaily said,  
But said in vain, The promised calm has come !

‘ Yet not in darkness do we worship here,  
Nor bow before an unknown God. The night  
Of signs is passed : God dwelleth not in symbols,  
Nor hides Himself in altars ; the red smoke  
Of sacrificial fire has cleared away,  
And shadows only blind, misteach, ensnare ;  
Our eyes and ears do but betray our souls ;  
In hands of sensuous man, all symbolism  
Or soon or late becomes idolatry.

‘ Thou unborn light, descending from above,  
Making the dead alive, the prisoner free,  
We bid thee welcome ! Light of charity,  
Such as earth knows not of, nor yet has seen,  
Full-beaming in the face of Him who is  
The world's one Light, break in upon  
The ancient mists, and bring the blessed noon !

Hell cannot stay Thee in Thy radiant march,  
Nor the deep grave bar Thy victorious way.

‘ Love is not beauty, beauty is not love,  
As some have taught ; yet both are linked together,  
Mother and daughter, each her proper self,  
And yet inseparable in their joy,  
Like sun and summer ! Both I see afar,  
Advancing hand in hand, ere long to fill  
Alike the lower and the upper sphere  
With the perfection they alone can give.  
Life brightens with the brightness that is shed,  
Not only from what has been, but from what  
Is yet to be. Let the whole earth rejoice :  
These are not clouds that hang above it, but  
The avenue thro’ which we enter in  
To light above all light, there to sit down  
As sons of peace in peace’s inmost hall.  
Thro’ these dim, winding ages of the mortal,  
Life threads its way to that which cannot die.

‘ As yet the time is not ; maturity  
Of ill as well as good God waiteth for.  
For unripe evil, just as unripe good,  
He will not pluck ; ’tis ripeness that He deals with.  
O deadly clusters of the poisoned vine,  
When will ye ripen for the vintage ? When  
Shall the dread voice, long listened for, be heard,—  
The voice of Him who sitteth on the cloud ?  
Thrust in Thy sickle, for the hour is come ;  
Gather the clusters of the vine of earth  
For the great wine-press of the wrath of God.  
But meanwhile here we toss, and dream, and wake.

Like sick men ill at ease ; we would be gone ;—  
But who shall lift us out of all this ill,  
Loosing our bonds and bidding us go free ?  
Upwards we cast our home-sick eyes, to see  
If some stray angel, passing by, will not  
Have pity on us, and remove us hence.  
Wait, starlight, wait, we say, as we look out  
On some dim dawn after a broken night ;—  
Wait, starlight, wait, tho' but for one brief hour ;  
We will go with you, for our souls are sick  
With the wild roar of this poor drunken earth.  
We dread another day, with all the clamour  
Which it will bring. Oh, wait and take us with you  
Upon your beamy wings. Nearest and purest,  
Thou gem of sweetness, star of holy dawn,  
Let us go with thee, and it shall be well !  
Thy city shall be ours, thy home our home,  
Where we shall rest beyond this withering strife.  
Nothing shall part us, sweetest star of heaven,  
Half silver and half gold, fair dove of dawn !  
Oh, take us with thee ; we have loved thee long,  
And fain, fain would have been with thee ere now.  
Canst thou not stoop to take us ? Or drop down  
Some silver cord, strong with eternal light,  
To lift us to your land of shadeless morn,  
Where not a cloud obscures the jewelled azure ;  
Where nothing dies, where nothing lives in vain ;  
Where light is light, and love is without change ;  
No hollow promises, nor fevered hands  
Clasping love's hand in vain ; no pallid lips,  
Pressed close together in the agony

Of farewells that send back the burning blood  
Cold to the heart ; no disappointed faith,  
Weary with waiting ; no red stains of sin  
Falling upon us ; no foreboding dreams  
Of what to-morrow may bring forth ; no fears  
Of failure for ourselves or others then ;  
No vessels, that once seemed at anchorage,  
Slipped from their moorings to go down at sea ;  
No pillaged derelicts, that once were barques  
Of noble name and goodly freight, as if  
Earth's mines had poured their riches into them :  
No widow's wail nor orphan's sob is yonder ;  
No piteous songs of madness or of grief ;  
No care-begotten furrows of the brow  
That should have been all marble in its smoothness ;  
No midnight shadows, no disastrous stars  
Darting their distant poison down on man ;  
No splintering bolt of fire, no sullen surge  
Of the sad ocean watching for its prey !

‘ Roll up, ye clouds, and let the sun burst thro’ !  
Earth needs it all ! Too long have been the years  
Of shade and frost. Dissolve the fixèd ice  
That sits upon each mountain-top, and sends  
Down on our valleys its benumbing chill.  
One day of that deep sunshine will undo  
Dark years of frost. Draw up these mists, O sun,  
That drench us with their cold, unmeaning spray,  
And clear the troubled air of sighs and dreams ;  
Breathe lovingly, thou balmy breeze of dawn,  
Shake the last rain-drops from the forest-boughs ;  
Raise the crushed violets, which the heavy foot

Of the hard hurricane had trodden down ;  
Swell out, O voice of the expanding song ;  
Into one holy concord gather up  
The squandered melodies of time, supplant  
The jar of ages, strike the unknown chord ;  
Still the world's wild waltz-music,—siren-sweet  
And quick with sudden fire to kindle up  
All youth's warm blood into the fever-heat  
Of passion, with its too delicious thrill.

‘ Swing the great censer ; let the holy fire  
Evoke the fragrance, scattering healthful balm  
From hands that knew no sin, and from a shrine  
Into which evil never found its way.  
Creation waiteth for the healing breath  
Of Him from whom all sickness flees, whose cross  
Struck into earth's dark soil shall be the cure  
For all creation's ills, tho' planted there  
By hands of men who knew not what they did,  
Nor how from it a purged world should rise.

‘ Roll out, ye incense-wreaths, diffuse your sweetness ;  
Do battle with the curse, and overcome it ;  
Wipe off each trace of the old serpent's slime ;  
Revivify the blasted wastes of death ;  
Bring back to sea and air their primal calm !  
Man has been struggling with this foward clay  
For ages, but has failed ; its barrenness  
Defies his skill and toil. O priestly breath  
Of One more potent than a child of sin,  
Go forth and do thy work upon this earth !  
Clothing with gladness the desponding hills,  
And disinfecting this hot atmosphere,

Tainted for ages with the fetid breath  
Of human sin. Call into vernal bloom  
Nature's long-budding beauty, checked and marred  
With cruel frost, or seared into abortion  
By suns too fierce to ripen or expand.

‘O sunny feast-days of the Church of God,  
That with the happy seasons come and go,  
Each with diffusive joy its glory shedding  
On the low scenes of earth, and making bright  
The gloom of common days ; when shall ye spread  
Over creation all your mirth and beauty,  
Lifting the low into the high, transfiguring  
The meanest things that be to comeliness,  
Such as ye only know, impregnating  
The universal air with breath from Him  
Whose breath is life, whose love the sacred light  
That fills the holy city, and lights up  
That hall wherein the one great feast is held,  
In which shall end the festivals of time ?

‘Draw bridle now ; the home-gate comes in view,  
Quick lights are glancing from each window-pane,  
The flag from the old turret signals peace,  
And voices from within shout, Welcome home !’

THE END.







